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ABSTRACT

This newsletter issue emphasizes the ways in which adolescence and its associated stages provide windows of opportunity for programmatic intervention and prevention strategies. Articles in the newsletter include the following: (1) "Developing Support Programs for Families with Adolescents"; (2) "Communicating with Your Children"; (3) "Teenage America: Myths and Realities"; (4) "The Latency Years: Building Bridges to Adolescence"; (5) "Family Involvement in Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Programs"; (6) Children and Television: Natural Partners"; and (7) A Preventive Mental Health Approach to Adolescents and Their Families. In addition, the newsletter issue features a resource file of national organizations, program examples, and publications dealing with families and adolescents, and reviews of films and videos on critical issues of adolescence. (HTH)

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● FOCUS *FAMILIES OF ADOLESCENTS: DEALING WITH CHANGE*

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

■ by Gail C. Christopher

In my two years as executive director of the Family Resource Coalition, I have had the pleasure of seeing the Board of Directors vote to expand the mission statement to include "youth." It now reads:

> ...to build support and resources within communities that strengthen and empower families, enhance the capacities of parents, and foster the optimal development of children and youth.

ADOLESCENCE

This issue of the *Report* reflects the depth and potential of FRC's expanded mission, and shows how lessons learned about early childhood prevention strategies offer insight for helping older children and their families.

Historically, the family support movement has built upon knowledge and information about the stages of normal child and human development and generated creative programs for meeting both family and community needs to optimize that development process. Family support programs seize opportunities presented during times of transition and rapid growth to provide critically needed support and resources. Through these programs, parents have learned to expand their capacities to nurture, socialize, communicate with, and educate their young children.

The writers who have contributed to this *Report* remind us that adolescence and its associated stages are windows, ideal for such programmatic intervention and prevention strategies. Irene Beck, a mental health educator and consultant to FRC, challenges us to use the latency period of development to reinforce strong family relationships as groundwork for the more complex teenage years.

Peter Scales of the Center for Early Adolescence, asks us to see beyond our images and perceptions of a generation "beset with major social problems." His article, "The Positive Possibilities of Young Adolescents," is an insightful overview that embraces our nation's youth with care and optimism.

Stephen Small at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has reviewed and analyzed preventive support programs for families with adolescents for the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. Highlights from his survey presented here, are a guide for planners and providers in developing and enriching programs.

Harold Howe II, of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, chaired the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship. In "Teenage America: Myths and Realities," he describes how young people are making the transition from school to adult roles and how national resources, practices, and policies can enhance that process.

As the national voice for the family support movement, the Family Resource Coalition is privileged to house and disseminate a clearinghouse of information about effective program strategies. This *Report* wraps these program examples in the comfort of new ideas and data on the vital connection between teenage youth and their families. Parents are clearly as central to the emotional health of the adolescent as they were in the early childhood years.

Communities and families of adolescents have the opportunity to provide relationships that nurture, support, and promote positive self-concepts for young people—not in the same way as in early childhood, but with the same value. If young children are our nation's future, then surely today's youth are the dawn of that future. Their needs must be addressed in the light of what we know about relationships, effective programs, and viable communities. This is particularly true of our at-risk young people whose needs are so acute.

Today's youth, together with their families, command our focused, constructive attention. This *Report* reveals how practitioners, researchers, and young people themselves are inviting us to provide needed leadership and direction. ☐

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■ by Peter Scales

The Positive Possibilities of Young Adolescents

In the United States during the last decade of the 20th century, we as a people have not spent much time in reflection. We get our information in swiftly cascading sound-bites and images, consuming the world's data like so much MTV. A *New York Times* article in December 1989, comparing the election of 1960 with 1988, reported that even the television news coverage of actual candidate talk had decreased from about 40 seconds per time to less than 10 seconds. Images substitute for understanding.

No less profound than how our gender or racial beliefs are affected, what we think about people in various life stages is also a product of this elevation of images over understanding. Early adolescence, that period from 10- to-15 years of age, is a prime example of this.

We have inherited a cultural understanding of young adolescents as being in a period of storm and stress, a transitional state or phase that, with a little bit of luck and benign neglect they'll "grow out of," a time of wholesale rebellion against authority and rejection of parents, an egocentric and indulgent period marked by preoccupation with sex and drugs. That's what we "know" about young adolescents.

Every one of those beliefs is wrong.

Perhaps the most frightening image is one you can see on television, a close-up of a sad or angry-looking kid with a deeply timbred voice-over telling us that adolescence can be a difficult time, and authoritatively assuring us that if our son or daughter needs help, this nifty residential hospital program will do the trick. The U.S. House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families reports that placing of adolescents in residential psychiatric hospitals is the fastest growing sector of the for-profit mental health care business.[1] Though some young people are in need of hospitalization, inappropriate treatment should concern professionals.

At a less egregious but still misleading level, the academic and popular press alike are filled with reports and recommendations about America's "at-risk" youth, telling us that at least half of the 28 million 10- to 17-year-olds in the U.S. are at moderate to high risk of failing at school, abusing drugs, becoming a delinquent, or becoming an adolescent parent.[2] It is not an exaggeration to suggest that reading or hearing about even a small proportion of these portrayals can induce a deep despair over the future prospects of our youth and our nation.

These negative images of a generation beset with major social problems also result in our viewing young people in a splintered and fragmented way, as a collection of discrete problems, to be responded to by an equally fragmented system of education, health, and social services. While some voices lately are insisting that genuine prevention requires looking at young people holistically and arranging support systems comprehensively, inertia remains a powerful force. In conversation with an official of an important children's advisory body recently, I was told that they had had little luck receiving funding for a generic and comprehensive prevention model and so were forced to retreat to a focus on preventing adolescent pregnancy, alcohol and other drug abuse, dropout, and whatever issue was dominating the prevention headlines. Even our funding patterns encourage us to view young adolescents in a fragmented way.

A Developmental Understanding of Positive Possibilities

The other image in this gestalt of early adolescence—the one we don't as readily see—is a picture of positive possibilities, of young adolescents as a source of hope rather than despair. In this picture, 80 percent of 15-year-olds have not had intercourse, 80 percent of young people under 17 do not have a drinking problem, and 80 percent are not regular smokers, among other facts.[3] This picture is there, but we only perceive it faintly—like the good news and decent acts of humanity that occur daily in our lives but which we tend to assume are rare. We almost take them for granted, even as we bemoan their supposed scarcity.

There are a few key physical, social, cognitive, and emotional issues of early adolescence that can help provide this deeper developmental understanding of positive possibilities. As much as possible, we need to examine these as intertwined correlates, for the most part inseparable from each other.

Physically, of course, the ages of 10–15 are a period of spurting, accelerated development. If all young people developed on equal schedules, this would be less problematic, but in any group of young adolescents of similar chronological age, there is enormous real variability in growth rates. The Search Institute in Minneapolis reported in the early 1980s that nearly four in ten 6th-grade boys and nearly six in ten 6th-grade girls worried a lot about their looks, with the figure rising to 50 percent and 66 percent by grade nine.[4] No wonder. If infancy has its "terrible twos" then early adolescence has its "terrible toos"—too much, too little, too slow, too fast.

Physical changes are related to perceptions of self, and it seems, in different ways for boys and girls. "Early maturing" boys tend to be happy with that status, scoring high on self-esteem measures, while "early maturing" girls tend to be less happy, scoring lower on self-esteem.[5]

Preoccupation with self in this age group was best described in the 1970s by psychologist David Elkind.[6] He portrayed young adolescents as acutely aware of a constant "imaginary audience" doggedly observing their every move, magnifying pimples into mountains and turning braces into cages. Young people played out this stage of life surrounded by this imaginary, always critical audience, but stayed the star of their own "personal fable," the story of their life as told from a single, if not simple, perspective.

Despite some changes, Elkind's framework still accurately describes a self-consciousness that is pronounced among 10- to 15-year-olds. The desire to do away with the "terrible toos" and fade into group conformity and peer acceptance emerges strongly in this period. There have always been those who want to leaven their peer acceptance with a little more personal style or statement (the first males to wear their hair long in the 1960s, or to wear an earring in the 1980s), and always a portion whose personal "style" choices veered dangerously off into the risky terrain of early sexual experiences, drugs, and delinquency. But even these choices are made in the context of trying to establish acceptance in a subgroup of some kind.

The young person moves through the period of early adolescence, establishing a group identity that serves as a cocoon in which the self-perceived caterpillar can miraculously metamorphose into the self-perceived butterfly with a personal identity. Unlike the butterfly's path, however, the process is neither as smooth nor as predictable. When one stars in a personal fable, with esteem depending so much on what others think, the usual ups and downs of daily life in which good days share the stage with bad and in which excitement alternates with periods of boredom, can seem as jarring to vulnerable feelings of self-worth as would a parent who crazes their child by alternately hugging and hitting.

The child who always asked for mom's permission or dad's approval suddenly demands privacy and respect instead. He or she may no longer want to go to church, visit relatives, have the same bathing or dressing habits, or the desire to tell parents what went on at school or where they plan to go with their friends. "Can Sally come out and play?" turns into "We're going out"; "Where, honey?" "Around." And "around" is the place parents fear most.

Of course, like their early adolescent children who often think concretely in terms of today, many parents of young adolescents slip into those patterns too, and overreact, jumping to conclusions when their kids are just floating trial balloons, experimenting, or, in truth, just having some fun seeing their parents react on schedule. It is a period in which parents watch helplessly as control over children turns into only the possibility of having influence with them, or of becoming estranged from their children if they handle it poorly.

It is an unanswered question as to who is having the harder time in early adolescence—young persons trying to develop their own identity or parents trying to accept that change and still hang onto their children. At bottom, however, it is parents who must adapt. Children's values must be tested in real life if they are to become personal and precious and serve as guiding principles. Borrowing other people's values without testing them is like borrowing someone else's ill-fitting suit. For better or worse, when parents allow their young adolescents to make decisions and choices, and don't always impose them (imposing sometimes is ok, always isn't), then they promote the development of strong values that parents want to occur.

A large contributor to the changeability of mood in this period is cognitive development. The predominance of concrete thinking, an egocentric perspective, a focus on "right now" and on fairly rigid standards of right and wrong gives way to more abstract thinking—the ability to consider possibilities and not just realities, to see things from another person's point of view, to allow perceived consequences of behavior to temper the desire for immediate gratification of wants, to consider exceptions to the rules. They are exposed to moral questions too, and may go back and forth between applying a standard of justice (what's "right") or a standard of caring (what's "fair").[7]

The psychologist Erik Erikson believed that people have to resolve particular psychosocial crises at each life stage in order to move on developmentally.[8] From late childhood through young adulthood (a period he thought stretched into a person's 20s), he believed that a person needed to achieve competence at something, a personal identity, and the ability to engage in the give and receipt of intimacy. Like the tremendous physical variability in any group of young adolescents at the same chronological age, the psychosocial range is also extraordinarily broad, such that all these psychosocial tasks characterize many 10- to 15-year-olds. The self-questions these tasks represent are: Am I capable? Am I normal? and Am I lovable? The more young adolescents can be helped to answer those questions "yes," the smoother that period will be.

A Balanced Picture of Young Adolescents

The foregoing picture is overly broad, helpful only in imparting some sense of common occurrences in the lives of young adolescents but giving no sense of proportion, intensity, duration, or the plethora of filtering mechanisms—both positive and negative—which help determine whether a particular adolescent's passage is a relatively tumultuous or tranquil one. Like a Seurat painting seen from a distance, we can see only the large pattern, not the countless small points of color that create the illusion of the whole.

And that is the problem with our understanding of early adolescence. The broad-brush portrait of the whole age group tends to be the limit of our vision. We ascribe characteristics to the whole that may be traits of the few. For example, thinking "storm and stress" is peculiar to this age group is one mistake. Psychologist Daniel Offer has shown instead that adolescence is no more pathological than any other age group.[9] Overall, about 80 percent of adolescents tend to have relatively problem-free passages. They experience the physical, social, cognitive, and emotional challenges already described, but meet them in relative peace. Most—about 40 percent of the 80 percent—go through a period of fits and starts, with changeability paramount, and the rest are evenly divided between those who experience serene and those who experience more stormy—but not pathological—development.

When all is said and done, according to a 1987 Harris poll, it may be adults who have the greatest storm and stress: nearly nine in ten report "high" stress on a regular basis, and nearly half of all adults said they had "great" stress once or twice a week![10] A 1985 study reported in the *Journal of School Health* also gives adults reason to pause and not assume we know what is stressful for all young people.[11] We would probably have predicted that 7th graders would find breaking up with a boy or girlfriend to be stressful; how many of us would have guessed, however, that getting a bad haircut would be thought just as stressful an event?

Overconcentration on pieces of early adolescent development is another mistake. One example was pointed out by attendees of the 1988 National Invitational Conference on the Health Futures of Adolescents.[12] Research on adolescence, those panelists said, has been preoccupied with separation and independence. Popular culture follows in depicting the period as one of rejection of parents, whereas rejection is really temporary and on a superficial level for most. The great majority of adolescents give their parents grades of B or better (not bad!) and say they agree with many of their parents' values on sex, politics, and religion.[13] Consider this: for both white and African-American adolescents, according to the National High School and Beyond Study of 1982–1986, young people's sense of their parents' caring for them had the highest correlation of any factors with whether those adolescents avoided childbearing in their adolescent years.[14]

The National Health Conference attendees also stated that we have tended to overlook the importance of attachment and how interpersonal relationships are transformed during adolescence. For example, early adolescence begins the tasks, not of separating from parents so much as differentiating and distancing from parents enough to establish a personal identity.

Continued on p. 22

■ by Stephen Small

Developing Support Programs for Families with Adolescents

• What does it take to be an effective parent of a teenager today?
• What types of programs currently exist to help parents of teens?
• How can programs better support and strengthen families with adolescents?

These are some of the questions I was asked to address by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development when they recently commissioned me to conduct a review of preventive programs for families with adolescents. In this article I would like to share with you some of the highlights from that review.

What Does It Take to Be an Effective Parent of a Teenager Today?

Based on current theory and research, a number of interrelated parental functions appear to be important for the socialization, development, and well-being of adolescents. These include providing basic resources, protecting children, guiding children's physical and psycho-social development, and advocating with the wider community on behalf of children (Alvy, 1987).

The first parental function— providing basic needs—includes acquiring an array of resources to meet the necessities of survival. A parent's ability to provide these resources is closely related to his or her occupation, education, and income. Parents who have fewer resources may be hindered in their ability to carry out some of their other parental responsibilities.

The protective function refers to the fact that it is parents who are usually responsible for guarding the physical, psychological, spiritual, and cultural integrity of their children from threats of the natural and social environments. This function of parents during adolescence is generally met through parental monitoring and the teaching of self-protection skills.

The guidance function involves all aspects of the child's development. Parents usually carry out this function by sharing information and setting limits, providing reinforcements and sanctions, communicating, and modeling the behaviors and values that are important to them.

The advocacy function refers to the parents' role as advocate and supporter of their children and as a coordinator and link to experts, individuals, groups, and institutions who help them raise their children.

All parental functions and competencies are not of equal importance. It is likely that these functions follow a hierarchical sequence. The meeting of basic needs probably precedes the protective function, which precedes the guidance and advocacy functions. Their degree of importance is likely to vary depending on the youth's particular needs and the family's specific life circumstances. Parents preoccupied with basic survival needs may have less time and energy to devote to other parental functions such as providing their child with appropriate limits or adequate support.

Parents are more likely to be successful in carrying out these parental functions if they have adequate support and are experiencing minimal stress. Belsky (1984) has identified three classes of factors that can support or undermine an individual's ability to be an effective parent: (1) the parent's personal and psychological resources, (2) the characteristics of the child, and (3) contextual sources of stress and support.

From this framework several implications can be drawn. First, preventive programs for families of adolescents should be directed at supporting or promoting these four parenting functions. Second, these programs should not only provide education on the competencies related to effective parenting, but should also focus on providing the resources that can enhance an individual's ability to perform these competencies. Finally, programs should be concerned with the reduction or removal of stressors and conditions that can undermine the functions of parents.

What Types of Programs Currently Exist to Help Parents?

Forty-one programs designed to support families with adolescents were identified through a nationwide search. For programs to be considered, they had to at minimum serve parents or guardians of adolescents or preadolescents. They could, but did not need to, also involve adolescents. This search was considered to be a first pass at what exists rather than an exhaustive and systematic compilation. A majority of the programs identified were based on curricula developed and made available to local groups or organizations. Programs were grouped into one of five categories according to their primary, self-defined goal: general parenting, sexuality, drug and alcohol prevention, achievement, and multi-service family resource centers.

No programs were found that addressed the basic resource provision function of parents. Drug prevention programs were more likely than other types of programs to emphasize the protective function of parents by teaching them to detect alcohol and drug use, and how to help children resist the pressures to use such substances. These programs also attempted to develop parent networks that serve both as parent support systems and as ways to monitor teen behavior.

Nearly every program, regardless of its goals, addressed competencies that serve the parental guidance function. The general parenting programs most commonly addressed communication, family decision-making skills, conveying parental support or warmth, and disciplining children. In most drug and alcohol prevention programs, enforcing rules and limits and improving parent-child communication were the competencies most often emphasized. Sexuality programs usually included a smaller range of guidance competencies; the most frequent ones were communication, sharing values, and decision making.

Only a few programs, primarily those concerned with achievement or drug and alcohol prevention, addressed the advocacy function. The most common method was to help parents become more knowledgeable about the availability and use of community resources.

In general, the review found that few programs took into account or addressed the diverse needs and learning styles of non-white, middle class audiences or non-traditional family structures. Programs generally ignored the fact that families might have an ethnic or cultural heritage which could influence family arrangements, values, and child-rearing practices. Limited emphasis was placed on the unique issues and challenges faced by single or stepparent families. In general, programs assumed that participants were fairly well educated, had the ability to read and articulate their thoughts and feelings, and could learn and apply fairly abstract principles about human relationships and children.

Only a handful of programs were identified that addressed the personal or developmental needs of adults who are raising adolescent children. Although many of the general parenting programs informally provide parents with opportunities to receive social support from other parents, few programs formally build in such opportunities.

A majority of the programs reviewed were

relatively short-term and didactic with a greater emphasis on parent education than on family support. Most of the programs appeared to be curricula-based, designed to be taught in a class-like setting. This approach appears to be quite different from preventive programs aimed at parents of young children where the trend has been toward less formal parent education, more opportunities for families to receive support, and programs that are more comprehensive and of longer duration.

Sound evaluation data on program effectiveness tended to be scarce. Many programs had not conducted an evaluation of any type and only a few had conducted formal, summative evaluations of program impacts and effectiveness.

How Can Programs Better Support and Strengthen Families with Teenagers?

Based on my review of programs for families with adolescents, I have developed a framework for enriching programs in this area. These suggested guidelines are based on current programming gaps and the needs of adolescents and their parents.

- Programs need to be more sensitive to the varying abilities and concerns of their participants and to reach out to a wider variety of audiences. There is a need for programs to involve less educated and less affluent audiences, especially those at greatest risk for many of the problems programs purport to prevent. In addition, program implementers should attempt to accommodate to variations in participants' educational backgrounds, ethnic and cultural heritage, and learning styles as they develop, market, and deliver their programs.
- Programs should be strategically planned, providing appropriate information, services, and resources at the most optimal time periods. For example, programs that focus on the acquisition and practice of general guidance, communication, conflict resolution, and discipline skills are probably most effective if begun when children are young. This helps develop a foundation for good parent-child relations when children enter adolescence. Issues that are primarily relevant to the adolescent years such as drug use, sexuality, and the developmental changes of both teenagers and parents, are probably best addressed in the preadolescent period (approximately ages 9 to 12). Finally, parents whose children are currently teenagers would probably benefit most from programs that offer opportunities for developing supportive ties with other parents who are experiencing similar challenges, provide parents with information to help them assess the severity of the problems they are experiencing, and offer referral suggestions if they are in need of more personalized help. In addition, such programs might also provide some opportunities to learn and practice communication, conflict resolution, discipline, and decision-making strategies that are developmentally appropriate.
- Because it is difficult for parents to attend to the needs of their children when their own needs are not being met, general parenting programs should cover the developmental changes of mid-life adults and the effects of these changes on relationships with adolescent children. They should also consider including information on the marital relationship and on personal coping, especially as it relates to the stressors and strains unique to parenting teenagers.
- It is recommended that a greater effort be made to provide opportunities where parents can obtain social support from each other. Program facilitators should be more planful about providing such opportunities for parents to share concerns, ideas, and experiences, and to maintain contact with one another after the formal program has ended.
- Programs need to do a better job of addressing the issues of families in changing structures and be more sensitive to the fact that adolescents grow up in a variety of household arrangements.
- There is a need for programs to do more to enhance parents' ability to advocate for their children by making parents aware that they have a right to advocate, and by teaching them the necessary skills and knowledge bases.
- Programs should enhance parents' ability to protect their children from the risks of contemporary society by facilitating the development of parental networks, for example, and teaching parents about mental and physical disorders that sometimes occur during adolescence.
- Programs need to consider whether the families they wish to reach are able to provide basic necessities for their children. Programs could provide referrals to social services and adapt their program delivery to better accommodate the needs of low-income families.
- The work status and arrangements of parents should be taken into account when scheduling and determining program delivery. Alternate methods need to be explored to meet the time pressures of working parents.
- It is important to recognize that optimal adolescent development is the result of a complex array of factors, spanning multiple levels of influence. Consequently, if we hope to reduce the risk factors associated with adolescent problem behavior and increase the developmental factors that can support optimal development, programs will need to recognize that parents are only a small part of a larger, more complicated set of influences.
- Closely related is the need to develop strategies that cut across organizational and agency boundaries to encourage comprehensive, community-wide efforts. Not only can such coordinated efforts serve to unite programs with common goals, but duplication of services can be eliminated.
- A number of general characteristics of effective prevention and family support programs have been identified in recent years. This literature suggests that programs need to have well-defined goals and objectives; plan program activities that are appropriately timed and closely tied to these goals; be sensitive to the unique strengths and characteristics of participants; include learning techniques that actively involve program participants; have a well-trained and highly skilled staff; increase efforts to cooperate and coordinate with other community organizations and programs; and sufficiently document program methods and procedures.

Barriers and Benefits

There are a number of obvious barriers to further program development for families with adolescents. First, the time commitment required by programs can be a major obstacle for the majority of today's parents who are working. A second obstacle is that parents often lack motivation to attend a program unless they are currently experiencing some difficulty or anticipate problems in the near future. A third obstacle is the dearth of data on what makes programs effective and for which audiences. Another barrier is the

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■ by Patricia Kramer

Communicating with your Children

The parent-child relationship is one of the most rewarding and pleasurable experiences that exists. It is also one of the most difficult and complex. Like any relationship, it is fraught with frustration, unrealistic expectations, and often just simple misunderstanding as a result of poor communication.

Relate is to relationship as parent is to child: You cannot have one without the other. The thorniest problem for parents and children today is that neither knows how to communicate effectively—with respect, dignity, or in such a way that both parties feel listened to and understood. Although families with adolescent and teenage children are particularly vulnerable in this area, many problems can be remedied by learning good communication skills.

We communicate in order to convey our thoughts, feelings, and ideas to another. We want someone else to understand our viewpoint, to listen to what we say, and to move toward resolution.

If a problem can't be resolved, then each at least deserves respect for how and what he/she believes. What parents usually want is for their children to do what they ask without too much confrontation. What children usually want is for their parents to simply listen to them.

Here are some "simple" guidelines that may help parents get their requests met more regularly:

• The way to build self-esteem in your child and enhance your relationship is to remember that he/she simply wants to be (1) listened to, (2) taken seriously, and (3) loved and accepted unconditionally.

• When praising your child, zero in on the effort, not necessarily the achievement. We often give too much credit for the end result without recognizing how difficult it is to get there.

• Don't judge your children. Respect their views and differences and allow them to express their own ideas and feelings. Respect individuality, independence, and privacy.

• Don't keep bringing up the past or allow it to affect the present. Using terms like always, never, or ever simply antagonize children. Saying "You're always late" or "You never do what you're told" only helps to reinforce negative behaviors that you're trying to change. It's called self-fulfilling prophecy. If children hear something often enough, they begin to believe it about themselves.

• Feelings are just that—feelings. They are not good or bad, right or wrong, so don't argue with your child when they tell you how they feel. Don't dismiss or discount their feelings as unimportant. Don't belittle, humiliate, or laugh at your child. When you broke up with that very special boy/girlfriend, you may remember hearing, "There are other fish in the sea," "It was only puppy love," "You'll get over it." At that moment, what you were feeling was very real. Try to remember that the same is true for your children.

• Listen, listen, listen. To be a good listener, you must want to hear what your children have to say and believe that what they say is important. Listen to their feelings, not just their words. Show with your body language, eye and physical contact that you are listening. Smile when it's appropriate, nod to show you are listening, ask questions that reflect your interest or help clarify a point to eliminate misunderstanding. Paraphrase, don't interpret, interrupt, or become distracted, etc. By actively listening, you increase your child's feelings of self-respect and self-worth.

• Be askable. Be open to discuss any subject that your child wants to talk about. If you want your children to make good, moral decisions, they must have enough information.

• Listen to your tone of voice: You only turn them off when you yell, whine, demand, or preach.

• Don't nag or keep repeating the same request. Saying the same things over and over again doesn't encourage your child to comply. Explain the request and why you feel it is important to you. Remind your child once—maybe twice. If there isn't a response, then take appropriate action. Be sure the discipline matches the actual behavior.

• Clarify your expectations. Children are not mind-readers; they cannot possibly know what's expected of them unless you make the message clear.

• When you criticize, point out the specific behavior you dislike. Don't be vague. Be sure your youngster understands that it is not she/he you dislike, but the behavior. For example: "I'm very upset because you didn't keep your word about calling when you couldn't be in by curfew" versus "I'm very angry with you." ("Tell me that you're disappointed with the unfinished chores you see, but calling me 'irresponsible' is no way to motivate me."—Marshall Rosenberg)*

• Every time you judge, close down, hold on too tight, or invade their space, you shut your children down further and further until they stop wanting to talk with you and eventually stop wanting even to be with you.

• Stay with the present and deal with only one issue at a time. If you throw in the kitchen sink every time you're angry, the result will be that your child won't hear anything you say. ("I can handle your telling me what I did or didn't do. And I can handle your interpretations, but please, don't mix the two."—Marshall Rosenberg)*

• When a child has a problem or gets into trouble, losing your temper or overreacting only makes him feel worse. Hear him out first; then show love and understanding rather than violence or anger. The appropriate discipline can follow later.

• Respect your child's opinion even though it probably will be different from yours most of the time. (Wasn't yours different from your parents?)

• Conduct family meetings at least once a week. This is an opportunity to clear the air, allowing everyone to voice complaints, hurts, and requests without fear of repercussion. These meetings can dispose of any ill feelings—rather than allowing them to be stored away waiting to pop up at any given time.

• Make listening a priority. Create a time to be alone. Put everything else aside. The message that your child will hear is, "I love you enough to listen to you."

• When a problem arises, first clarify your involvement in the incident or situation, decide whose problem it is, own the behavior, and then state your wishes and requests. For example: When you are unhappy about the way your child keeps her room, whose problem is it? (If it were your child's, she would keep the room clean.) If you customarily say something like "Your room looks like a pigsty. You should be ashamed of yourself. You can't possibly find anything in there. Don't you have any self-respect?" you may have noticed by now that your child does not run and clean the room and keep it like that forever after. Right? You probably use a version of these words rather routinely, too. The "you" statement assigns the problem to someone else and puts your child on the defensive. Remember it is not her problem, it's yours.

Continued on p. 23

*The Center for Nonviolent Communication—Cleveland, Ohio

THE HAZARDS OF AWARENESS: CHILDREN IN A GLOBAL WORLD

■ by Phyllis LaFarge

"When those people are hurting the animals and the forest do they know that they're hurting everyone in the world?"

These are the words of a fifth grader in a letter addressed to the Rainforest Alliance, a nonprofit group dedicated to the preservation of tropical rainforests. They suggest that the writer is aware, at least rudimentarily, of the way in which many problems today can be global in their implications and consequences. Most adults have only begun to develop such a global consciousness in the last decade in the wake of Chernobyl, the threat of global warming, international terrorism, the ozone hole over Antarctica, and the evolution of a world financial market.

What is it like for children to grow up with an awareness that they live in a world in which unrestrained technological prowess has created vulnerabilities on a global scale? We do not have a complete answer but some clues can be derived from what is understood of young people's responses to the threat of nuclear war.

Early in the 1980s, researchers found that by the time children were in elementary school, the majority knew about the destructive potential of nuclear weapons, whether or not teachers or parents had raised the subject with them: television and other aspects of popular culture, particularly comics, had informed them (Spiderman, one should recall, became Spiderman because he was bitten by a radioactive spider!).

Young people's awareness was shaped by their developmental level, and often early adolescents were the most concerned. More knowledgeable than younger children, they were less able than older adolescents to distance themselves from a gut sense of nuclear weapons' potential destructiveness through a more abstract, schematizing, "adult" way of thinking.

Although fear was the term usually used to characterize what children felt about the risk of nuclear war, a gamut of responses ranging from concern through anger to moments of outright despair would be a more accurate description. All these feelings—particularly that of helplessness—are natural reactions to an awareness of the risk of a contaminated world or a world full of dangers over which one has no control, such as acts of international terrorism like the Lockerbie disaster or random local violence. Helplessness can be exacerbated—and cynicism encouraged—among older adolescents, if not in young children, if they become aware of the government's reluctance to deal decisively with issues.

When risk has a long-term aspect—for instance, through the threat of climate change or the proliferation of toxic wastes, a reaction of helplessness is linked with a feeling of a contaminated future. These feelings are incompatible with hope, and hope is a developmental necessity for a young person. I believe that most young people handle this conflict by restricting their awareness of their own and the planet's vulnerability. They are inclined to live at two levels, rarely if ever allowing awareness to break through to fuller consciousness and emotional response.

In many ways this is a healthy reaction since it favors a sense of moving forward in life and a sense of being in control. But it does not encourage eventual political engagement with important public issues, and it should be a concern to teachers, parents, and mental health professionals who are interested in the civic and political involvement of the next generation. It should also be a concern to those—there are many—who sense an underlying bleakness of attitude in young people.

Research concerning children and the nuclear issue suggests that for an individual not to live at two levels but to maintain some degree of on-going awareness of a public issue involving the specter of risk on a global scale requires a conviction that one can do something about it, even if only in a small way—that one can be active, not helpless. The fact that young people are likely to learn about the problems and vulnerabilities of the world from television does not necessarily encourage their involvement, perhaps quite the opposite. Television bypasses the adults in the child's life, and it is these adults who can show the path to engagement and furnish the social support that helps young people (and adults) maintain an ongoing and active concern for difficult issues.

Unfortunately, it is not easy for most adults to take up issues connected with global risks with young people; they are too aware of their own lack of expertise, they themselves must screen out consciousness in order to maintain a sense of control, and they may feel grief or guilt at the prospect of the world their children are inheriting. With respect to the nuclear arms issue, until the very recent thawing of the Cold War, the idea of opposing national security policy, even by implication, kept all but the most courageous silent, especially in the setting of the schools.

Talking about environmental concerns does not challenge national security policy in the same way, although, in fact, complex issues of economic security and competitiveness are involved. Moreover, environmental issues are clearly local problems as well as global. This gives them an immediate and tangible quality and this concreteness is helpful in engaging children. Many schools and families are already active in recycling programs, but I believe that teenagers could be encouraged to play a more active role in neighborhoods and apartment buildings—a role that would add to their own sense of being able to make a difference at an important juncture in their lives.

Although it is easier to find meaningful local responses with respect to environmental than to arms race issues, the public has recently begun to understand the way in which the two areas of concern overlap as information about the inadequate disposal of toxic military wastes has become more available, and an intense local issue in many states.

It may be that only when every global issue is seen to have ramifications in all our backyards will we face our vulnerabilities. When we do so, we will have an opportunity to forge new bonds with our children. □

Phyllis LaFarge, a contributing editor to Parents Magazine, *is the author of* The Strangelove Legacy: The Impact of the Nuclear Threat on Children *(Harper & Row, 1987). She has also published articles about education concerning controversial public issues in the* Annual Review of Peace Activism *and the* Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. *Ms. La Farge is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.*

Contact her at: 333 Central Park West, New York, NY 10025 212/864-0477.

For parents and teachers who wish to help young people face the vulnerabilities of the world they are growing into, and at the same time instill a sense of hope, here are a few suggestions:

- Bring information into the home and classroom. The newsletters of advocacy organizations such as the National Resources Defense Council are excellent in this regard.
- Watch television shows about public issues with young people and discuss the shows. Silence about complex and worrisome issues may be comforting to adults but it encourages young people to feel abandoned, to restrict awareness and, eventually to withdraw from the political process.
- Be open with your own concerns about the world's vulnerabilities. Doing so is likely to validate some of a teenager's feelings and may build a basis for shared action. But in voicing concern, avoid handwringing and self-indulgent gloom.
- Be sure that young people learn the "success stories" associated with public issues as well as the unfinished business.
- Encourage responsible roles for young people at home and school. Make it possible for them to play an active, participatory role in relation to what they are learning at school, or in relation to a family program of recycling, energy conservation, or letter writing.
- As parents, provide support to teachers for teaching about public issues. This support is often vital to teachers, who may fear subjects deemed to be controversial.

■ by Harold Howe II

Teenage America: Myths and Realities

Opinion polls show that American adults harbor a predominantly negative view of teenagers. This perception isn't surprising considering the barrage of sensational and damaging stories we encounter daily. In addition, more and more adults are self-appointed experts in child development and use their negative perception of youth to exaggerate the trials and tribulation of the period in life called adolescence.

These two misapprehensions feed upon each other in today's America in a fashion that discredits each successive generation of teenagers. Instead of viewing our youth as needing special attention from adults to mature as responsible citizens in a society that grows more complex each passing year, we tend toward two reactions: The first is to turn them over to schools with the message, "Study hard, and someday when you know enough and are more civilized than you now are, we'll welcome you into adulthood." The second is to offer them less attention from adults than in the past, partly because adults think of them negatively and partly because adults have less time for them.

Three major changes in adult life lie behind the decline in time for children and youth: (1) the rapid move of women into the labor market; (2) the growth in recent years of single parent families; and (3) the steady increase, since the early 1970s, in the number and proportion of young people exposed to poverty in their families. Each of these changes has its own origins, and the first two clearly should not be arbitrarily characterized as unfortunate. But taken together, their combined effects have presented new difficulties for children and youth in the process of maturing.

If you ask teenagers affected by these developments what they think adults think about them, their responses are not positive. The message many of them get from the adult world can be summarized in the statement of one, "They think we're a bunch of bums." On the other hand, if you ask teenagers how they feel about their relationships with their parents and other adults whom they know well, their response is generally positive. They want more and deeper association. When asked what opportunities they would like to have with adults, their main reply is "Just talk." Perhaps this statement is a response to the large portion of time teenagers spend with adults watching television.

When this analysis of youth-adult relationships is set forth for discussion, the response of thoughtful people is, "Aren't you forgetting something? All that we are hearing about drugs, dropouts, delinquency, irresponsible sex, and suicide among youth can't be a myth." And, of course, they're correct. There are some serious problems that cry out for attention. What's needed is a sensible perspective based upon a combination of up-to-date facts and reasonable judgment concerning their meaning. By characterizing an entire age group as best represented by listing the sins of some of them, we run the very real danger of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. An immense amount of harm can be done by stereotyping all youth through powerful anecdotal evidence.

In an effort to lend some balance to the interpretation of recent data on the youth problems I have mentioned, I would like to quote two paragraphs from an August 1989 publication of the William T. Grant Foundation entitled, *American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot*. First issued in 1987, this publication was brought up to date in a new 1989 edition. The author, James R. Wetzel, has served in the Census Bureau of the U.S. and is familiar with both the use and the misuse of statistics. He summarizes his extensive report as follows:

> The picture that emerges from the overall averages suggests that an increasing share of our nation's youth are moving in positive directions. Decreasing rates of alcohol and drug abuse, increasing education and labor force participation of young women, and the overall reduction in teen parenting provide reason for cautious optimism. Still, there is no room for complacency. Out-of-wedlock child-bearing has risen, young men are not recording the same levels of college attendance and completion they were a decade ago, and far too many youth are drawn to alcohol and drug abuse.

A second quotation from the same publication comes from the Foreword and was written by me:

> When reviewing Mr. Wetzel's data it is essential to remember the enormous diversity that these aggregate figures contain. National statistics cannot help but mask the degree of troubles faced by young people living in particular neighborhoods and in certain areas of the country. Their difficulties must not be minimized by unwarranted optimism. It is equally important, however, that we not over-generalize the difficulties of some young people and so overlook the determined efforts of the vast majority of American youth to contribute to their families and communities and prepare themselves for successful futures....

In this short essay, it would be a mistake to pursue the mixed statistical data about youth at greater length. So I will mention just two categories, about which I think there are misunderstandings based in part on sensationalism. One is teenage suicide. It has continued at the rate of about 12-13 per 100,000 youths over the last ten years, about one-third the rate for adults. It is higher for college students than non-college, and three times higher for males as compared to females. Blacks' rate of suicide is half that of whites. None of this information should be taken to suggest that suicide prevention is not worthwhile.

The second is education, a wide and deep area of concern throughout the U.S. that is now engaging political and business leaders along with teachers, other educators, and citizens generally. I will venture here a personal judgment on education in the U.S. consisting of five brief assertions, each of which has implications for education improvement strategy.

- The U.S. should be proud of what it has done to bring a steadily growing proportion of its diverse society to progressively higher levels of schooling, so that today 86 percent of young adults hold high school graduation credentials.
- In spite of this attainment, there is a serious need for improved levels of learning in all schools and particularly in those which serve large numbers of young people whose learning horizons are limited by the lack of stimulation and support available to them in family and community.
- Changes in schools to produce the required new levels of learning are more likely to emerge by enlisting parents, teachers, and other educators in the processes of change than by telling them they are inadequate, legislating their activities for change, and comparing our schools with those in societies harboring little of the kind of social and economic diversity found in the U.S.
- The inequitable distributions of funds for schools in the U.S. is a major source of educational inadequacy for disadvantaged students and for a good number of others.
- The assumption that schools can be fixed so they can overcome all the disadvantages imposed on children and youth by growing poverty is a naive and erroneous view.

For the remainder of this statement, I would like to focus upon several initiatives suggested in the *Report* of the William T. Grant Foundation Commission. It tried to identify policies and activities that are useful in helping youngsters with serious problems and to ensure that a growing proportion of our youth do not become ensnared in self-destroying behavior.

From the Commission's many recommendations for educational change, I would select two: (1) the development by states and localities of an operating "second-chance" system in education; and (2), as part of that system, the encouragement of large scale experiments involving school/business partnerships in the revival of apprentice-like, work-study experience for 15-20 year-olds.

Across the U.S. today, we have literally thousands of efforts to re-enlist dropouts in education. Some are integrated with schools; others are entirely separate from them. But the typical secondary school still continues to view the dropout as just that—a kid who has left and for whom it has (thank God!) no further responsibility. There is little evidence that high schools feel truly obligated to those that have left them or that they are learning to serve potential dropouts better by copying the approaches of interesting programs that are having some success in turning wayward youngsters around. The apprenticeship model is particularly appealing because it holds the possibility of showing young people that they can hope for a job with a future rather than the dead-end type of work almost all of them flounder in for years after leaving high school.

The work of the William T. Grant Foundation Commission recognized that family and community are powerful influences in the lives of youth, probably more powerful than schooling. The Commission asserted, "Efforts to produce success in school—without complementary efforts in families and communities—are unlikely to make a substantial difference for young people (*Final Report*, p. 3)." Dozens of recommendations are made in our study to bring these three realms together, and numerous examples of useful activities across the U.S. are cited. Here I will mention three strategies that are worth expanding: youth service programs, mentoring projects, and efforts to make existing services for youth more aware of each other and more readily available.

Youth Service Programs

This is an idea whose time has come; Senator Edward Kennedy is pushing a bill through the Senate to support it, and President Bush has his staff working to define the program he will back. A group of foundations is creating a fund of several million dollars to launch youth service activities in a dozen or more cities. In the meantime, statewide or citywide youth service endeavors have started in a number of places. Formal evaluations of several of these strongly undergird their value in terms of useful accomplishments for dollars invested. Less is known about the long-term impact of youth service on the lives of the young. But the broad concept of community service as an essential ingredient of citizenship in America combines with the evident growth of self-esteem among the youngsters involved to suggest real value in such endeavors.

Many issues appear as this activity expands. Should there be a national youth corps? Should voluntary service be required? Should volunteers be paid? Can youth corps be designed to bring young people the kind of collegial associations with adults they so clearly need? Should efforts be made to mix cultural and social backgrounds? As such queries are being answered in different ways in different places, it is important to say that most young Americans who would benefit from such an experience today, don't have the chance.

Mentoring

Even though less is known from reliable research about mentoring than about youth service, it shares with youth corps activities the current wave of enthusiastic support. Common sense suggests that youth without adequate family or community support and advice will be helped by the friendly presence of an adult mentor in their lives. Some preliminary studies by Public/Private Ventures in Philadelphia point out that retired people can make effective mentors, partly because they have the time and also because the association with young people enriches their own lives. The same study indicates that the most effective mentors may not be highly successful people who believe themselves to be role models. Instead, adults who have had some of the same problems in their lives with which youth contend—substance abuse, poverty, school failure—may work out better.

Problems abound: how to select mentors; how to train them; how to connect them with youth; how to avoid high turnover; and how to help them deal with both families and the law as their youth get into difficult personal problems. But in spite of these issues, this practice seems to be genuinely helpful to many youth and deserves significant expansion as well as more analysis.

Providing More Comprehensive Services

For a long time, social service agencies, including schools, have reasoned that the many sources of funding and action geared to meeting the multiple needs of youth should be better coordinated and more convenient for those served. Several suggestions on this subject are made in the William T. Grant Foundation Commission's *Final Report* (see particularly Chapter 3, "Toward More Responsive Communities").

My comments on this difficult area are that coordination of programs at the top (the state or national levels where they originate) does not necessarily produce coordination at the service delivery level where kids and their families get money, medical attention, or advice and guidance. To produce real cooperation among agencies with fiscal and turf rivalries is a tough but necessary task that first requires new levels of leadership in the agencies involved. An example of what is needed will be found in a document entitled *New Partnerships: Education's Stake in the Family Support Act of 1988*. This is available from the William T. Grant Foundation's office in Washington, DC. It offers a case study designed by ten separate agencies on how to meld the education and welfare systems of the U.S. at local, state, and national levels. □

Harold Howe II is a Senior Lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. His work as an educator has included roles as teacher, principal, and school superintendent. He was U.S. Commissioner of Education for President Lyndon Johnson and Vice President for Education and Research at the Ford Foundation. In 1987 and 1988, he chaired the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship; this article draws mainly on that study of American youth and young adults. The Commission published two major reports and a variety of working papers. All are available. See Resource File on page 18 for titles and ordering information.

Contact: Harold Howe II, Harvard University Graduate School of Education, #419 Gutman Library, Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138-3704, 617/495-3577.

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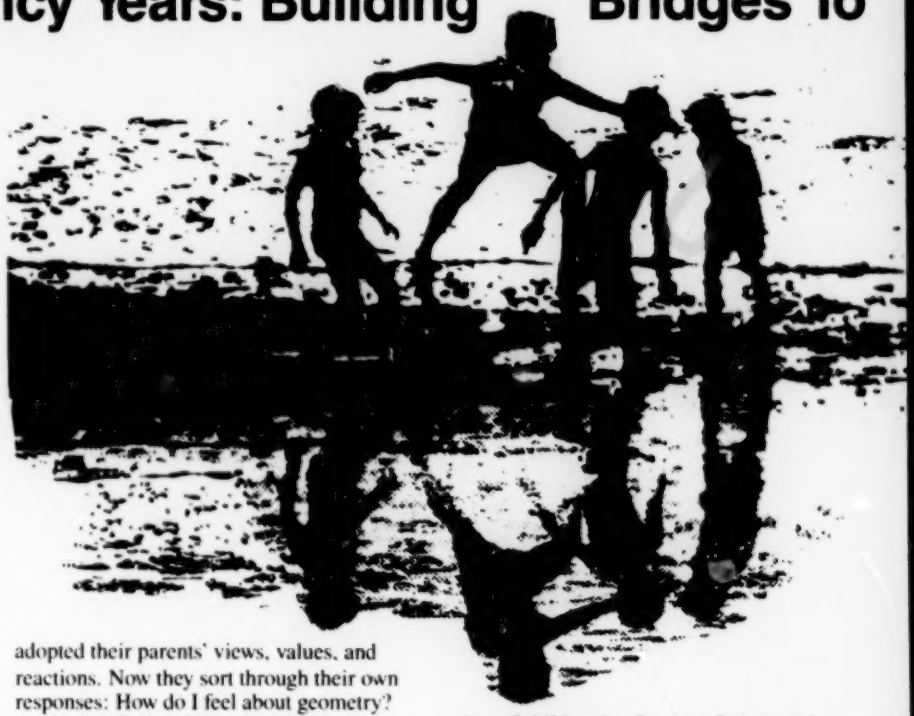
■ by Irene Beck

The Latency Years: Building Bridges To



The ages and stages of adolescence are often wrapped in myths, memories, and misunderstandings. Children who have grown through the terrible twos and the peaceful preteen years can unpredictably change and challenge. Parents, having struggled through sleepless nights and toilet training, may find their familiar ways of handling situations no longer work.

Adolescence brings with it many new physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. Most parents say they're not ready for what's ahead, and look at the approaching teen years through dread-colored glasses. Preparing for the battle of the wills, they fear the worst and find themselves in skirmishes over car keys, curfew, clothes, and ultimately over who is in the driver's seat. Whose life is this anyway? And who's going to call the shots today?

Parents of teens need some reassurance that the child they used to know and love is still inside an ever-changing exterior. Yet their teen sends them mixed messages like: Like my music, but don't go around singing my songs; Remember my friends' names, but don't ever talk to their parents; Pay attention to me, but don't check up on me; Show me you still love me, but don't treat me like I'm your child!

Understanding how to juggle silent or shouted conflicting cries for independence and nurturing is a tricky business, and parents of teens see their children entering a world that holds far more dangers and opportunities for disaster than in the past. Sex, AIDS, violence, drugs, alcohol, environmental hazards, and nuclear destruction loom large. And the evidence of adolescents' vulnerabilities are everywhere: teen pregnancy and parenting, addiction, crime, accident, and suicide rates scream out.

Misunderstandings abound. Teens feel intensely about almost everything; the exceptions are probably items parents care about such as phone bills, chores, and good grades. Teens are into short-range planning; go past next Saturday and you're in the distant future. Parents often think they're long-range planners, but regularly get stuck in the middle range; just get into a good college, just get your diploma, just get out of high school in one piece without getting pregnant, addicted, or arrested.

Parents may feel they're steering their teens through an obstacle course without being behind the wheel, and the teens may think life's like a video game—they know the screens and the pitfalls better than their parents and their reflexes are faster.

Many teens today convey an air of independence and worldly wisdom, yet yearn for adult support. Through all the slipping and sliding toward independence, teens are called upon to make countless choices and decisions. Prior to adolescence, they mostly adopted their parents' views, values, and reactions. Now they sort through their own responses: How do I feel about geometry? Acid rain? College? Apartheid? Family dinners?

Teens need education and information about the dangers and opportunities awaiting them. They need direction and guidance in building decision-making skills and making sound judgments. They need open communication with parents and other adults as the locus of control shifts to their shoulders.

Learning new ways to help their teens grow can be daunting and draining, and parents often find themselves isolated and lacking clear guidelines. The theoretical approach to adolescence is young. While child and adult theories of development have existed for hundreds of years, there was no transitional period between childhood and adulthood seen before this century. Rites of passage into the adult world often were marked early on: the ability to earn wages, bear children, recite the Holy Word, or hunt with the elders. Teenagers are new on the scene, theoretically speaking.

In defining this new identity, adolescence was set apart. In higher education, development courses were taught in two separate sections: child and adolescent. Middle schools and junior high schools were created in order to span the years between elementary and high school.

In our culture, adolescents have been given extra years to prepare for adulthood to form their own identity, decide which role models to emulate, become independent of their parents, establish their own sexuality, and choose a career path.

However, in making the teenage years a discrete stage of development, the prevailing view of children has become fragmented. Childhood has been chopped into pieces that discourage parents from seeing the larger picture; adolescence is but another era in their children's timeline.

What Can Parents Do?

Much of the work of prevention is in preparation. Just as you took precautions in pregnancy and prepared for your child's birth, you can use the relatively calm years of your child's latency period (6–12) to prepare for the transition to adulthood.

Become Informed. Read. Talk to other parents. Most importantly, talk with and listen to your child. Knowing what is ahead can empower you, and preparing for rapid changes can be time well spent by you and your youngster.

Build your Child's Strengths.

- **Communication Skills.** Within your family, agree to disagree. Make it safe for your child to challenge your point of view. Show her there can be several valid opinions on a subject. Talk about something in the news or on a television show; teach her to articulate her position and to question others. This will be essential for her future ability to resist following the crowd.
- **Negotiation.** Instead of settling family disputes yourself, as you probably did when your child was younger, teach him to resolve conflicts with his own strategies. When he confronts your limits, ask him what he thinks is preferable. Consider his requests; honor them whenever possible. Strengthening his negotiating abilities may lessen his need for rebellion later on.

Adolescence

PHOTO: JANE HAE BROWN

- **Self-Esteem.** Help your child recognize her strengths. When she brings home a report card with mixed grades, ask her to tell you how she earned her good grades. Help her apply her positive work habits to areas that need improvement. As a teen, she will need this reassurance of her own competence in order to take sensible risks.
- **Develop Interests.** Share a search with your child for something he loves to do. Hobbies can grow into beneficial extracurricular activities; introduce him to peers with similar interests, constructively occupy his free time and build valuable related skills that are physical, mental, or social.

Parents of preteens and adolescents who look for community resources may find very few. While many supports have become available for parents going through pregnancy, childbirth, preschool, and the early elementary school years, substantial gaps exist in support services for parents throughout their children's latency and adolescent years.

Typically, a spate of preventive, parent-child oriented programs is usually available for parents of young children, but they taper off by age 12 with cautions for latchkey children. After a break of several years, during a child's latency development, services resume but almost exclusively in problem-focused programs that intervene after crises such as teen pregnancy, drug addiction, or drunk driving have erupted. And, these programs deal directly with adolescents, not with their parents as primary participants.

How can parents respond? Families need to reclaim their teens, keeping them close to the fold. It is also vital that parents try to prevent teenage problems long before their children's adolescence is upon them. Rather than being lulled into complacency, parents can use their children's latency years as fertile preparation for the future. While channels of communication with their preteens are still open and the children are receptive, parents can choose to convey the values they hold dear. They can establish traditions and favorite "together" times that they and their teen can later fall back on. They can stand as strong role models for their growing child to follow.

The tensions and turbulence that come with change sweep through the teen years. For many families with younger children, the hard part is still ahead. But parents who do their homework ahead of time, building bridges in their children's latency years, can alter the level of struggles they may face.

What Can Programs Do?

Providers of family support programs may not automatically think of adolescents and parents of teens as part of their typical constituency. Those who do are likely to be working on interventive rather than preventive approaches to adolescent issues.

Vanguard programs which have attempted to address potential problems through prevention have run into roadblocks that can seem intractable. Funding sources are reluctant to switch streams of revenue from familiar, rocky areas such as substance abuse or teen parenting to prevention programs that do not focus on a problem area, but on enhancing the strengths of children within their families.

For example, suburban communities, concerned about small but significant inroads by urban gangs, have been turned down in their attempts to augment local crime prevention units with gang-related experts. Reasons for denying funding rest on the argument that there is insufficient evidence of a serious problem. The maxim "If it's not broken, don't fix it" can wreak havoc when applied to children. It is a perspective that views gangs or drug abuse as the significant problem rather than as symptoms of deeper, underlying problems such as teens' loneliness, or their inability to delay gratification, set goals for themselves, or even believe in their own worth.

Programmatic attempts to bring parents and teens together run into opposition on many fronts. At this juncture in a family's life, most parents are working outside the home, as are many teens. Time is limited, and teens often resist required attendance at family-related functions. In many families where no blatant problems exist, everyone may have moved off in separate directions attending to their individual needs with no overlapping energy given to the family unit. In families where problems have surfaced, parents often feel weary or powerless to effect change, and teens with troubles may be seen or feel themselves isolated from the rest of the family. Fearing some of the worst adolescent problems such as delinquency or suicide, parents may avoid participating in programs that could stigmatize their children through labeling.

An alternative programmatic approach would be to maximize the strengths children develop during their latency period. Youngsters between the ages of six and twelve usually become increasingly responsible and responsive; they emulate and imitate adult ways. They accept authority, and most importantly still want to be with their parents. They are pleasant to be around. Parents of children in this age range often feel empowered. They have mastered the daily life of parenting—it is predictable. They feel they must have done something right since their children are no longer obstreperous as they were in the toddler period, nor do they cause problems like the older, rebellious children of friends.

Family support programs could initiate new directions for the graduates of their early childhood projects. Rather than limiting services to families of children in preschool years, programs could encourage ongoing participation through the elementary school years. Weekend programs could offer a natural extension that fits a family's schedule as well as timeline.

In educating parents, emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of their staying close to their children through latency and adolescence. Parents may not be sufficiently aware of their older children's strong developmental need for adult supervision and guidance.

Older children who continue to be involved in the activities of family support programs would have excellent opportunities to broaden their trust in other adults who serve as vital role models.

Offering a support group for parents of adolescents could provide much needed encouragement and practical swapping of advice. These parents could serve as Big Sisters and Brothers to parents of preteens.

Programs could be organized for parents and preteen children, emphasizing opportunities to spend time together. Parents could explore ways to connect with their children in shared pastimes and common interests, such as critiquing movies together, rating local fast food restaurants, playing or watching sports, or people watching. Instead of using the developmentally quiet years to go their separate ways, parents and children can build bridges and pathways that both can walk together in later years. □

Irene Beck, Ed.D., works in the field of mental health education. She writes a nationally syndicated news column on families, moderates and produces educational teleconferences, and designs innovative programs for parents and educators related to child and adolescent issues. Dr. Beck is a staff consultant to the Family Resource Coalition and can be contacted through the FRC office.

Have You Talked to Your Kids Lately?

● In Montana communities, parents and their adolescent children do a lot of talking—about responsible sex, about AIDS, about alcohol and drug abuse, about feelings. Mostly, they are becoming comfortable talking with each other—about values, and how to deal with life's ups and downs.

The impetus for all this conversation comes from the Montana State University Extension Service and a program called **PACT** (Parents and Adolescents Can Talk), developed as a sexuality and communication education program for youth and their parents. The program approach is based on the belief that the family plays a central role in the development of healthy sexual attitudes and responsible sexual behavior among adolescents.

The program uses an integrated curriculum, involving both parents and children, and PACT research indicates that this approach increases family communication about sexuality and facilitates the transfer of parental values and standards.

In each of four age-appropriate curricula, youth and parents meet together and separately as they explore the sensitive issues of sexuality. The major purpose of the program is to help young people build positive self-concepts and improve their communication and decision-making skills, enabling them to exercise greater responsibility over their sexual behavior and resist media and peer pressure to become sexually active.

The program includes a preadolescent curriculum for fifth-sixth graders and their parents, an adolescent curriculum for seventh-ninth graders and their parents, an older youth program for tenth-twelfth graders and their parents, and a peer facilitator curriculum for past PACT participants who want additional training to become volunteer leaders for other groups in their communities. PACT has also added a school-based curriculum with a corollary out-of-school parent education component.

The training program is presented over 15–20 hours and focuses on interpersonal communication, self-esteem, assertiveness, decision making and problem solving, knowledge of physiology and reproductive health, and family values and attitudes. Each PACT group consists of six to ten family units and two specially trained facilitators.

More than 358 community leaders in 75 communities have been trained since 1987; programs have been implemented in 30 of these communities. More than 1,000 youth and their parents have been directly involved in PACT groups, 80 percent of whom completed the sessions, and 67 percent of whom returned for a four month follow-up session. Males comprised 43 percent of the youth, and fathers 30 percent of the parent participants.

The program includes a pre-test, a post-test, and a four-month follow-up testing of participants for a profile of knowledge, attitudes, communication, and behavior.

An important aspect of the PACT program is the mobilization and training of a cadre of adults within a community to provide leadership for implementing a local program. A broad cross-section of adults who represent the full range of conservative to liberal views is important to program viability and community ownership of the program.

PACT was originally developed and tested through MSU's Department of Home Economics as a teenage pregnancy prevention demonstration model, funded in part by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The American Medical Association has honored PACT with a national award for excellence in adolescent programming. ○

For further information about the curricula, contact: Joye B. Kohl, Project Director, Parents and Adolescents Can Talk, Extension Service—Taylor Hall, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717 406/994-4981. ►FRC

A Lot Can Happen on the Streets

● More than two million young people run away or become homeless in the United States each year. Some return home without incident; others are vulnerable to prostitution, child pornography, rape, drug trafficking, or die from exposure or disease.

Running away crosses all social, economic, ethnic, and family boundaries. Teens run on impulse after a hurtful argument, or plan an escape after years of abuse; they may be unable to cope with school problems, family issues of alcoholism or divorce, or a combination of difficult situations.

In 1974, looking at the increasing number of runaway youth becoming permanent residents of a street culture and the great loss of human resources this represented, the state of Michigan invested in an alternative service delivery system—**the Michigan Network of Runaway and Youth Services** (MNRYS), designed to address the needs of families in crisis before a permanent breakdown occurred. Michigan recognized that the family unit was seen as the best hope for repairing lives, and thus the primary work of reversing the tide of social problems meant helping families learn to heal themselves and work effectively toward their own growth and change.

MNRYS is currently a statewide, private, nonprofit organization made up of 29 member programs and a toll-free runaway hotline. Free, confidential services include short-term shelter, counseling, and support groups for youth and parents; all services are voluntary. MNRYS provides training and technical assistance to member agencies, acts as an advocate with other organizations, and coordinates public education on runaway issues through public speakers, workshops, press releases, a newsletter, and resource development.

The Network agencies confront a complex array of emotional, mental health, substance abuse, sexuality, and domestic violence issues. They serve as one last safety net before more traditional systems, such as juvenile justice or Protective Services are called in to resolve problems. State law permits these programs to house a young person up to 14 days with counseling focused on resolving the issues that led to the runaway episode. Parents frequently participate in the counseling, and their permission is required if the youth is housed beyond 24 hours.

Additional services vary from program to program; they may include support groups for both youth and parents, peer counseling programs, recreational activities, skill-building or prevention-oriented workshops, public presentations to community groups, and 24-hour crisis lines.

Three types of runaway programs are operated in Michigan: First, a residential program or "shelter" which houses clients within the facility itself. These can range from free-standing emergency housing to multi-purpose youth service agencies. Through these programs, food, clothing, and the security of a safe shelter are given to young people who might otherwise resort to living on the streets.

In the second type of program, state licensed foster homes are used to house runaways during their time of involvement with MNRYS. Families and children receive counseling which works toward the youngster's early and safe return home. If foster care is not used, these programs may engage in in-home counseling and visiting the family regularly in an effort to work out conflicts and set goals for positive change.

Lastly, juvenile diversion programs for status offenders work to keep troubled and abused young people out of the juvenile justice system, preventing their interaction with serious criminals and providing sensitive attention to the underlying causes of their offense.

Independent living projects have also been developed, focused on building the basic living skills homeless youth need in order to live on their own, such as getting a job and housing, maintaining a budget, and accepting responsibility for their own lives.

Michigan also has a 24-hour, statewide, toll-free hotline for runaways called RAPLINE which provides immediate information, referral, and crisis counseling to youth who have run away or are considering it, as well as to their friends and relatives. The RAPLINE will also relay messages between runaways and their parents upon request. This service helps prevent runaway episodes by relieving family stress and directing families to crisis counseling before a complete breakdown of communication has occurred.

MNRYS resources include *Talk to Me*, a 25-minute video which can be used as a discussion starter with parent and teen audiences, and as an outreach and public education tool for teachers, counselors, and other helping professionals. ○

For more information on the program or a publications list, contact: Barbara Rachelson, Executive Director, 115 W. Allegan, Suite 310, Lansing, MI 48933 517/484-5262. ►FRC

Mediation Serves Families in Conflict

THE CHILDREN'S HEARINGS PROJECT

● Using mediation as a means of conflict resolution in situations where the parties are parents and children is a recent development in the field. The **Children's Hearings Project** (CHP) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, began working in 1981 to test the effectiveness of this kind of intervention with families where the presenting problems appeared to center on the adolescent child. CHP is a part of the Cambridge Family and Children's Service, a private, nonprofit human service agency.

CHP started as a court diversion program to offer mediation as an alternative in two types of cases: those involving status offenders—children who were brought to court by parents or others as truants, runaways, or because of behavior considered beyond the parents' control—and those in which protective issues—the risk of parental abuse or neglect—were the cause. The project has gradually broadened to include cases, not necessarily court involved, where children between the ages of twelve and seventeen are the focus of family turmoil. Referrals come from the court system and from agencies, schools, and mental health professionals who see mediation as an adjunct to the other kinds of help a family might need.

Mediations are conducted by community volunteers, trained in the techniques and skills of the process, who serve as objective third parties in encouraging open dialogue between family members. The focus of mediation is to explore the potential for change in those behaviors and attitudes that have led to conflict, confusion of roles, and breakdown of communication. Viewing the family as a system makes it possible to see mediation as a useful intervention.

Generally, mediations take three to four hours, and although second mediations are common, they are not routinely assumed. Within this brief time, the mediators work to help families sort out their most urgent issues and arrive at a written agreement that specifies in concrete terms what each person commits to do. These agreement points are seen on two levels: such typical concerns as the time by which the youngster will be home at night, who will do which chores, how money matters will be arranged between parent and child, school attendance, behavior, and the like. On the second level are more complex problems that may be troubling the family—respect, autonomy, trust, and communication. Whatever the particular details and circumstances, the central underlying issue in every parent-child mediation is the issue of control.

After a while, the agreement and its content begin to seem less important and the educational aspect of the process, in which parent and child learn what is for many a radically different way of dealing with each other, becomes central. Although mediation is not therapy, it can be therapeutic for the family system when such changes alter the patterns of family interaction.

Recognition by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services that mediation may keep a child and family from further court involvement and prevent long-term out-of-home placement for the child has led to the expansion of parent-child mediation services throughout the state. Using the CHP model, which began as a demonstration and research program supported by private foundations, has helped to make funds available to numerous other private, nonprofit agencies to develop mediation programs for managing family difficulties.

The staff and consultants at CHP provide training in community theory and skills for volunteers, and a variety of training and program consultant services to professionals and agencies throughout the country. In addition, they train students and school staff in conflict resolution and mediation skills, and provide program consultation for the design and implementation of school-based programs.

The project has several helpful resources available: a 28-minute video, *Family Mediation*, shows the actual stages of a mediation as a family works toward agreement; a Parent-Child Mediation Resource Guide explains how the process can be useful to professionals who work with adolescents and their families; manuals for both mediators and trainers; and a research report on a two-year study of the project. ○

Contact: Melissa Brodrick, the Children's Hearings Project of Cambridge Family and Children's Service, 99 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA 02139 617/661-4701. ►FRC

Thanks to Geraldine W.K. Zetzel, whose observations as mediator and trainer were basic to this program description.

►FRC Member of the Family Resource Coalition

■ by Theodora Ooms

Family Involvement in Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Programs

Programs for pregnant teenagers and teen parents increasingly realize the importance of involving their client's parents, siblings, and others in the program's services. Whether the problem is alcohol, drugs, delinquency, pregnancy, or serious emotional disturbance, the most effective youth-serving programs recognize that parents of troubled adolescents are sometimes a part of the problem, are always affected by it, and usually must be a part of the solution.

Family involvement is a little-noticed requirement of the 1981 federal law reauthorizing the Adolescent Family Life Demonstration Grants Program (Title XX of P.L. 97-35). This was a revolutionary idea but it was dismissed by many as simply meaning that parents had to consent to their teenage daughter's receiving services—a controversial notion largely supported by political conservatives. But family involvement means much more than this.

Programs that were set up to help pregnant teens and teen parents in the late 1960s and 1970s were based on a medical individualistic model and provided a range of health services. Gradually new programs expanded to meet a more comprehensive range of needs, but still their exclusive focus was on the individual teenage client and her baby. More recently the focus of programs influenced by a "systems" model has broadened to include the family, community, and cultural context of pregnant teens and teen mothers.

The findings of a small but growing number of studies and accumulated program experience provide a strong rationale for program staff to include family members in their services. Among the major findings are the following:

- The pregnant teenager's family—most often her mother, but it may be others—have a strong direct and/or indirect influence on her decisions about her pregnancy and, if she keeps her baby, on her living situation, child care arrangement, nutrition and parenting practice, and whether she completes school and/or goes to work.
- The large majority of unwed teen mothers live with their families. When teen mothers receive support and assistance from their families, their babies' health and well-being is better than if they try to manage on their own.
- Unwed teenage pregnancy is a crisis for the family system, not solely for the teenager, and can place great stress on family relationships.
- Teen pregnancy and parenthood are frequently associated with serious family dysfunction (e.g., parental neglect, family conflict or crisis, or parents conveying double messages about sexuality and pregnancy).

These findings led to the general conclusion that in order to maximize their effectiveness, program staff need, at a minimum, to: 1) directly assess the attitudes, roles, and available resources of the important members of their teen client's family; 2) employ whatever strategies are possible to maximize family support and assistance; and 3) diffuse, mediate, or help resolve conflicts between the teenager and her family.

Staff need to acknowledge the fact that compared with the strength and longevity of the family's influence, a program's efforts are short-term and often of limited impact. If the staff do not contact and/or work with their teen client's family, several results are likely to occur. First, her family may inadvertently or deliberately pull in the opposite direction, in effect sabotaging the program's goals regarding good nutrition and parenting practices, her return to school, and so forth.

Alternately, her family may share the program's goals but be upset, confused, or mistaken about the best ways to help the pregnant teen achieve those goals. Third, if the family's reactions and conflict are not brought out in the open and dealt with, the teenager is more likely to become pregnant again, too soon, or a sibling in the family may become pregnant. Fourth, only direct attempts to work with the family will reveal the resources they can mobilize to help their daughter, or the true extent of some families' serious neglect, abuse, or total incapacity to help the pregnant teen. Finally, only direct contacts with the teenage client's family—especially through home visits—will reveal the serious and pervasive nature of many families' problems (e.g., lack of income, inadequate housing, depression, alcohol abuse, etc.), that make it difficult or impossible for the teenager to solve her own problems. While few teen parent programs have the resources to meet these broader family needs, an effective program will know where and how to refer the family for help.

The rationale for involving the fathers of the babies, and the fathers' families, is similar to the rationale for involving the teen mother's family. Some programs have made independent efforts to involve fathers and others do so as part of an overall strategy.

It was basically for these reasons that the Title XX legislation required grantees to "use such methods as will strengthen the capacity of families to deal with sexual activity, pregnancy, or parenthood of adolescents." However, no federal guidelines or technical assistance was provided to help programs implement the family involvement requirement. Nor were they encouraged to collect any data on their work with families.

In 1987, an exploratory study of family involvement in the Adolescent Family Life programs was funded by the Office of Population Affairs. A research team at Catholic University, under the leadership of Sandra Hanson, Ph.D., conducted several site visits, sent a mailed survey to 236 program directors, supervisors, line staff, and evaluators in 79 programs, and analyzed available computerized data from five programs. Among the preliminary findings are:

- The large majority of program personnel believed strongly in the importance of family involvement and contact with their client's male partners, yet only a few were involving families in any significant way.
- Programs are employing a variety of policies and practices as examples of family involvement, but these efforts are few, haphazard, and sporadic for the most part. These include talking with a family member during the intake process, regular family counseling sessions, making home visits, offering family members an opportunity to participate with the adolescent client in prenatal classes, nutrition sessions, or their own (grandmothers) support groups.
- Program staff are least likely to involve families in those situations where it would seem to be most needed—situations of serious conflict, alcohol or drug abuse, etc.
- Many program staff make home visits, yet these occasions are seldom used as a strategy to enhance family involvement.
- Many financing and organizational factors serve as barriers to increased family involvement; for example, very few programs allowed line workers caseload "credit" for working with family members.

This study generated many ideas for further research to develop better measures of family involvement and to assess outcomes. The study's executive summary, full report, and a guide on family involvement for program personnel will be available from the Office of Population Affairs/HHS in late summer 1990. □

Theodora Ooms is director of the Family Impact Seminar at the Research and Education Foundation of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. She is a social worker and family therapist with major interests in family policy and the area of adolescent pregnancy. Ms Ooms has edited and co-authored several books and reports; the most recent, Young Unwed Fathers: Research Review, Policy Dilemmas and Options, *was published by DHHS in 1987.*

Contact: Theodora Ooms, Director, Family Impact Seminar/AAMFT, 1717 K Street, NW, Suite 407, Washington, DC 20006 202/429-1825.

Adapted with permission from an article published in TEC NETWORKS, July 1988.

■ by John Merrow

Children and Television: Natural Partners

In a documentary I produced some years ago called "Part-Time Work," 17-year-old Danny recognizes that he's wasted his high school years and faces a bleak future as 'just another worker'. After the documentary aired, however, Danny enrolled in college and majored in television production and theater. In another documentary, Ricky is seen as a high school dropout naively dreaming of a career in the National Basketball Association—another young black athlete exploited for his ability to score baskets, and then abandoned. But Ricky now has a high school diploma, is attending community college, and hasn't played serious basketball for years.

I am not confessing to fraud and deception. The camera showed Ricky and Danny as we found them, but being around and on television changed their lives. The experience of being filmed redirected their futures. My thesis here is simple; what happened to Danny and Ricky could easily happen—and should happen—to millions of American school children.

The familiar cliche about the camera not lying is wrong, of course. Camera angles, lighting, producers, writers, and editors all help define the reality you see. What's more striking, however, is how the act of intervening in a life—in the effort to capture the truth of that life—produces unpredictable results.

Why did television change Danny and Ricky? Is Danny going into television and theater because of his exposure to camera operators, sound technicians, and so forth? Was being with us merely a form of vocational education? Yes, but it was more; I think that making television gave Danny and Ricky some insight into, and power over, their own lives. And I firmly believe that schools could, and should, provide that experience for their students.

Television is a fact of children's lives. Young people between the ages of 6 and 11 watch, on average, 27 hours of TV a week. That amounts to two months of the year in front of the tube. Thirty percent of 9-year-olds watch six or more hours a day; 50 percent of 13-year-olds are glued to the box 3-5 hours every day. Only at age 17 does viewing drop sharply; most 17-year-olds watch less than two hours of TV daily.

Dry statistics come to life in conversations with the young. One afternoon in a high school in Peoria, Illinois I was allowed to take over an English class. Students told me that TV was "boring and repetitive," but what I remember most clearly was not what they watched but the number of sets; three-quarters of the class had their own TV sets; every household had at least two sets, and a few had as many as five! Youngsters reported that, in their homes, the TV was on "all the time."

I asked whether they watched with their parents and, if so, who picked the programs. One young girl's answer: "Nobody really chooses. We just watch whatever's on. Mom and Daddy may be in the room with us, but they're not really with us, if you know what I mean." That says it all: all-pervasive television as a soporific, enervating, and frustrating experience that isolates viewers, even those sitting side by side.

But I don't want to join the legions of TV-bashers, and not just because I make my living in television. I also am reluctant to join the academic researchers who have, in the past thirty years, produced more than 3,000 reports, usually calling for more and better children's programming or for more public access. My experience as a journalist and as a parent leads me to believe that a more helpful step would be to invite children to be around, in, and on television.

Children want desperately to be on television, as anyone who's taken a camera crew into a school can attest. Why do children jump, stare, turn cartwheels, wave, and shout "Hi, Mom"? I think that their mob-like behavior is, paradoxically, a search for individuality. We seem to have become the polar opposite of those aborigines who fear that cameras will steal their souls; to children, being on TV proves that they exist, that they matter. But educational institutions see children as empty vessels into which teachers pour knowledge, or as the raw material for their "knowledge factory." Children get the message they're minor cogs in schooling's machine, and in ever-increasing numbers young people are rejecting that message by quitting school. Today one in four students drops out.

Can television, the greatest tool of mass communication ever developed, be a means of individualizing learning? Of course it can. Television is not only our neighbor, our common language, our link, and the collector of our experiences. Used skillfully, it could be the instructional and motivational tool of the 1990s, the means of revitalizing our schools and of turning on our children in positive, life-enhancing ways. I'm saying, "Teach children—beginning in elementary school—to make TV." And as they learn to make television, they will also learn most of the other lessons, values, and basic skills we want them to.

TV—The Great Motivator

Here's the basic equipment that a school would need to make passable television: a camera (of the mini-cam variety), a tripod, two portable video/sound recorders or decks, two color monitors, and an editing unit. A school system's purchasing agent ought to be able to buy the complete package (simple equipment—nothing fancy) for under $5,000, and further savings could be realized on quantity purchases.

Two recorders allow the editing of raw tape. For example, suppose the fourth grade at PS 208 is producing a school news program. For a 6-minute segment about the cafeteria, the class's camera operators might shoot three 20-minute tapes of food being prepared, served, eaten, wasted, and so forth. For a 4-minute report on the new gym teacher, the actual interview might run 20 minutes or more. But the news program is only 15 minutes long with the anchor's introductions, other news, credits, music, and perhaps a few commercial messages. That means editing, choosing which pictures and sound bites to use. The anchor will probably flub a few times when reading copy, and that means editing also. It's real TV production. The editors transfer the selected images onto a master tape, and that's what the audience sees. The outtakes disappear, and the tapes are used over and over again.

The possibilities are nearly endless. For example, junior high school social studies classes could make news programs about a particular historical period, with judges picking the winner. Or chemistry experiments could be videotaped and edited to teach both new material and lab techniques (as well as editing, of course). Any imaginative music, art, physical ed, or dramatic arts teacher would find dozens of ways to have students use the equipment.

Let me give an example from my own high school teaching 23 years ago. That year, I decided to let the class put Macbeth and his wife, Lady Macbeth, on trial for first-degree murder. Was he insane? Did she lead him into murder? Students took on the roles of

Continued on p. 20

Resource File

Health

San Francisco AIDS Foundation
333 Valencia Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
415/864-4376 Sterling Winterhalter, III

Beginning with four community leaders in 1982, SFAF now has 85 paid staff and a volunteer bank of 600. The Foundation is a leader in providing both innovative, accurate education materials to the general public and model direct services to people with AIDS and ARC. Their excellent materials are written and illustrated for audiences in all ethnic and age groups and can be ordered through the AIDS Educator catalog which includes posters, brochures, pamphlets, videos, etc. SFAF produces a variety of teen-directed materials: *The Parent-Teen AIDS Education Project*, a multimedia program designed for parents of adolescents; and *Risky Business*, a comic book approach to educating teens about the dangers of AIDS infection and the need for informed, safe sex.

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
3615 Wisconsin Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20016 202/966-7300

AACAP specialists are involved in the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders affecting children and adolescents and their families. They publish *Facts for Families*, brief information sheets on a variety of topics such as depression, alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorders, teen pregnancy, suicide, learning disabilities, etc. and a poster-size glossary describing treatable, preventable mental illnesses affecting teenagers. These publications can help parents, teachers, and teens learn when to seek professional help and how to contact helpful organizations. A pamphlet on normal adolescent development (ages 12–19) is also available. Single copies are free; send for publications order form to AACAP, attn: Melissa Duprat, Box 96106, Washington, DC 90090-6106.

Education

American Guidance Service
Publishers' Building, P.O. Box 99
Circle Pines, MN 55014-1796 1/800-328-2560

STEP/Teen: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting of Teens by Don Dinkmeyer, Sr., and Gary D. McKay (1983, $99.50 complete kit). Using a group discussion format, STEP/Teen teaches specific parenting skills and a system of communication that works toward improved parent-teen understanding and youngsters who are more confident and self-reliant. The program uses a 10-session approach to build positive relationships, change emotional responses, encourage self-esteem, learn effective listening skills, express feelings, teach natural and logical consequences, and deal with discipline challenges. Each kit includes a Leader's Guide, a Parents' Guide, five audiocassettes, and publicity aids. The AGS catalog offers a range of high quality materials for special education, parenting, in-service training, and guidance.

National Committee for Citizens in Education
10840 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 301
Columbia, MD 21044 301/997-9300

The Middle School Years: A Parents' Handbook by Nancy Berla, Anne T. Henderson, and William Kerewsky (1989, 92 pp., $8.95). This valuable, easy-to-read book first helps parents understand how their 10- to 14-year-olds develop, think, and feel, and then suggests ways parents can help children improve their achievement in middle school. Chapters cover: what is normal behavior for this age group; the need for learning basic skills; what constitutes a good middle school; and how important it is for parents to get involved and ways to participate. Additional reading materials are suggested at the end of each chapter and parents are encouraged to use the resources as guidelines. NCCE also publishes *NETWORK*, an information newsletter, six times a year for public school personnel and parents; attached to it is the NCCE catalog of print and video resources, and services to help improve schools.

The Sheppard Pratt National Center for Human Development
Educational Services for Children & Adolescents
6501 N. Charles Street, P.O. Box 5503
Baltimore, MD 21285 301/938-3908

A leader in the mental health field, the Center offers custom-designed workshops and programs at their location or outside it. Drawing on a network of professionals, they work directly with children, parents, and educators in programs that include: training and support services for school-based student mediation; a dropout prevention series for students at risk; a school-based program focused on living alcohol and drug-free, dealing with change and stress, and eating disorders; and a teen improvisational theater group that acts out dramas based on issues of concern among their peers. See page 21 for a description of No Hang-Ups!, their taped message call-in service for teens.

Degrassi High
WGBH-TV 125 Western Avenue
Boston, MA 02134 617/492-2777

The award-winning television series, *Degrassi Junior High*, presented on PBS since 1987, has grown up with its cast members and graduated to high school. The new 1990 series, *Degrassi High*, portrays real-life situations that face adolescents, focusing on issues such as peer pressure, divorce, teen pregnancy, date abuse, social responsibility, and relationships. The episodes are presented from the adolescent point of view, and the goal is to help young people understand the variety of choices available in any one situation. Important printed materials have been developed to augment the themes of each episode: the Degrassi Discussion and Activity Guide, a 24-page magazine for educators, health workers, and youth organization leaders; and a newspaper for students are available at minimal cost. Contact Degrassi High, Box 2222, South Easton, MA 02375, 617/963-8666 for information.

Active Parenting
810 Franklin Court, Suite B
Marietta, GA 30067 404/429-0565
Dr. Michael Popkin

Active Parenting of Teens Video/Discussion Program is a parenting education program for professionals to use with parent groups. Video taped scenarios are used to teach an active parenting style by combining taped and live exercises with group interaction and support. The program is formatted into six 1½–2 hour group discussion sessions, covering topics that range from understanding children to winning cooperation. The issues of sexuality and drug and alcohol use, how to talk to teens and preteens about these sensitive subjects, how to set limits and how to impose mutually agreed upon consequences are also addressed. A new version of the program, *The Active Parenting of Teens All-Video Format*, presents the same material in six 30-minute sessions that are self-contained and require no leader. Actor Dick Van Patten narrates both programs.

National and State Organizations

National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting, Inc. (NOAPP)
P.O. Box 2365 Reston, VA 22090 301/913-0378
Kathleen Sheeran, Executive Director

NOAPP's national membership is focused on preventing adolescent pregnancy and the problems related to adolescent sexuality, pregnancy, and parenting. They publish the *NOAPP Network*, a substantive quarterly newsletter, and offer technical assistance to programs and coalitions, hold an annual conference, offer training events for professionals, and maintain data on resources and programs in each state.

Center for Early Adolescence
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Suite 211, Carr Mill Mall
Carrboro, NC 27510 919/966-1148
Frank Loda, Director

CEA is in its second decade of promoting the healthy growth and development of 10- to 15-year-olds, and is recognized as a unique national resource and information clearing house for youth and family-serving professionals. CEA develops training programs for professionals and volunteers who work with youth in this age group, and focuses on issues relating to school improvement, literacy, math skills, community service, and parent education. Among their many excellent publications, two examples: *Early Adolescence: A Resource Directory* by Susan Rosenzweig and Kathleen Dunleavy (1987, 55 pp., $7) lists and fully annotates organizations and journals that focus on topics affecting early adolescents' education, development, religion, family, community, health, and sexuality. Geared to professionals, and national in scope. Also, *Families with Young Adolescents: A Resource List* by Susan Rosenzweig and Kathleen Dunleavy (1987, 53 pp., $7). Annotated entries describe books, curricula, reports, guides, studies, pamphlets,

workbooks, etc. Divided in two sections—one for professionals, the other for parents—the directory focuses on topics such as risk-taking, family life, peer influence, sexuality, discipline, gender and ethnic issues, etc.

National Black Child Development Institute

1463 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005 202/387-1281
Evelyn K. Moore, Executive Director

NBCDI is a 20-year old national, nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for black children, focusing primarily in the areas of health, child welfare, education, and childcare. Through their affiliates in 33 cities across the country, the organization monitors public policy issues that affect black children and helps to educate the public through periodic reports, two quarterly newsletters—the *Black Child Advocate* and *Child Health Talk*—and a group of focused, small books. For example: *Teens, TV, and Telephones: A Survival Guide for Parents* (1988, 16 pgs., $4) and *Beyond the Stereotypes: A Guide to Resources for Black Girls and Young Women* (1986, 75 pgs., $8.50), an annotated selection of culturally relevant, motivational books, records, and films.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development

2400 N Street, NW 6th floor
Washington, DC 20037-1153 202/429-7979
Ruby Takanishi, Executive Director

CCAD is an operating program of Carnegie Corporation of New York, established in 1986 to bring sustained public attention to the risks and opportunities of the adolescent years (ages 10–15). Council members are 25 national leaders from the fields of education, law, health, science, religion, business, the media, youth-serving agencies, and government who chart and review the Council's activities in education, research, prevention, health, and the media. Small working groups are formed to examine issues in adolescent development and evaluate current approaches and programs. The members' work—reports, seminars, workshops, and meetings—are reported to the public, and a list of "Working Papers" can be requested. An Executive Summary of their recent report on the education of young adolescents, *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, is now available.

The Indiana Youth Institute

333 N. Alabama St., Suite 200
Indianapolis, IN 46204 317/634-4222
Patricia Turner-Smith, Director

IYI provides information, training, technical assistance, research, and public education for Indiana youth-service providers and policymakers. Established in 1988, IYI is an independent, nonprofit organization developing a resource center to disseminate information on issues related to youth and successful programs for youth in the state. They publish a newsletter, sponsor conferences, and link individuals, associations, communities, agencies, and programs in order to share strategies and resources for the betterment of Indiana youth.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

People Reaching Out

5433 El Camino Ave., Suite 700
Carmichael, CA 95608 916/971-3300
Mary Trudeau, Program Coordinator

PRO's drug/alcohol prevention focus on the youth and families in the greater Sacramento area is carried out through a paraprofessional counseling program staffed by volunteers trained and supervised by two clinical psychologists. Students Reaching Out works with middle school students in a prevention program that deals with accurate drug information, peer pressure, and decision-making and refusal skills. Athletes Reaching Out pairs professional athletes with youth to discuss self-esteem, goal setting, the importance of being drug-free, and the self-discipline required to achieve success. A community Forum series brings national and local experts together with families and educators on issues relating to parent-child relationships, healthy lifestyles, personal growth, and prevention of substance abuse. PRO also publishes a quarterly newsletter, and an excellent educational brochure on drug and alcohol use and abuse.

Children of Alcoholics Foundation, Inc.

200 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10166 212/351-2680
James T. Dowell, Executive Director

Reporting that one out of every eight Americans is the child of an alcoholic, CAF is geared to educate the public and professionals about this group of young and adult children. They promote and disseminate research on the effects of family alcoholism, encourage government response, and develop programs and materials to help break the intergenerational cycle of family alcohol abuse. CAF provides both information and referral services, and produces a variety of print and video resources such as: *The Images Within*, an alcohol education and prevention program for children, and *Kids Talking to Kids*, a 17-minute video of five children from alcoholic families discussing problems they've faced and overcome (for children 9–13, includes a teacher's discussion guide).

Quest International

537 Jones Road, Granville OH 43023-0566
1/800-446-2700

Lions Club International, the world's largest service organization, and Quest International, a nonprofit educational organization, have formed a joint venture to raise consciousness regarding drug and alcohol abuse. Their six-year old Lions-Quest *Skills for Adolescence* is a drug education curriculum designed by 57 educators and researchers for 10- to 14-year-old students. The program is a semester-long course aimed at developing self-awareness and self-confidence while teaching young people how to set goals and make responsible decisions. The program brings schools, parents, and communities together through classroom activities, parent involvement, and service learning projects. More than 11,000 schools are involved worldwide.

Community Service

Y.E.S. Youth Exchanging with Seniors

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center,
School of Medicine, Dept. of Internal Medicine,
Lubbock, TX 79430 806/743-3161
Sheryl Boyd, Ed.D.

This pilot project is an interagency, intergenerational, education initiative that unites 4-H, FHA (Future Homemakers of America), and other youth organization members with their elders in a volunteer, community-based human services exchange. Assisted living and chore type services will be provided by youth to seniors in rural west Texas where a major shortage of medical personnel and health facilities exists. Offered on a sliding scale, fee-for-service basis, the approach allows youth to develop small business management skills, and preserves the dignity of the elderly who become purchasing customers, not just passive care recipients. Project guidebooks will be provided to high school home economics teachers and 4-H agents in 20 counties who will initiate projects in their communities.

Early Adolescent Helper Program

City University of New York Graduate Center
25 W. 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036
212/719-9066 Joan Schine, Director

EAHP is designed specifically for 11- to 14-year-olds who are too young for jobs and too old for most after-school programs. Youngsters can participate through daycare, Head Start, latch-key programs, and senior centers—playing with younger children, recording oral histories, and escorting on field trips. Most programs are coordinated through schools where Helper-trained adults lead weekly seminars that help the children learn from their problems and successes on the job. The program motivates students to stay in school, learn about the work world, raises self-esteem, and provides extra hands for overworked community service agencies. Publications and video materials are available.

Maryland Student Service Alliance/Summer Corps

Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201
301/783-5654 Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Director

This is a volunteer program for 100 Baltimore-area high school students who work in a 6–8 person team for four or eight weeks, beginning with a skills orientation session, gaining experience in problem-solving and how they can make a difference in their community. They have weatherized homes for the elderly, built a park at a women's and children's shelter, organized recreational activities for special needs children, taught reading to children and adults, written and performed a skit about drug abuse for their peers, and planted sea grass to help save the Chesapeake Bay. Maryland has mandated a year-long Community Service course for the high school curriculum and is unique in requiring high schools to provide credit toward graduation for this work. The Alliance runs other programs during the school year; contact them for more information.

Resource File

Publications

Network Publications
P.O. Box 1830 Santa Cruz, CA 96061-1830
Helen Eidemiller, 408/438-4080

One of the largest publishers of family life and health education resources in the country, Network produces teachers' guides, resource manuals, curricula, videos, and other materials that support educators' efforts to motivate young people to choose positive health behaviors. They also gather resources from other publishers, nonprofit organizations, national associations, individual school districts, and public and private agencies and distribute them with their own titles through a comprehensive catalog of print and audiovisual resources. Network also publishes the *Family Life Educator,* a respected quarterly journal for educators that reviews resources and is a forum for new ideas and teaching tools.

Family Impact Seminar
1717 K Street, NW Suite 407
Washington, DC 20006 202/429-1825
Theodora Ooms, Director

Briefing Reports are prepared as background material for the Family Impact Seminars' monthly family policy seminar series conducted for congressional and executive branch staff in Washington, DC. These reports include a 15–25 page summary of the research and policy issues, highlights of the panelists' presentations and discussion, and organizational resources and references. Send for a list of available titles which include: "Young, Unwed Fathers and Welfare Reform" (11-27-88); the "Unique Health Needs of Adolescents: Implications for Health Care Insurance and Financing" (2-24-89); "Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Programs: What Have We Learned?" (5-26-89).

William T. Grant Foundation
1001 Connecticut Ave., NW Suite 301
Washington, DC 20036 202/775-9731
Samuel Halperin, Study Director

A Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship was convened by the Foundation in 1986 with a 3-part charge: to find out what research and demonstration projects could teach about how—and how well—American young people were making the transition from school to adult roles in work and family life; to determine what practices worked best in bringing about this transition successfully; and to suggest additional ways the full potential of youth could be used to ensure their successful participation in America's future. The follow-up work continues, based on the Commission's publications. Two major reports were issued: *The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America, An Interim Report on the School to Work Transition* (1988, 101 pp.), and *The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families, a Final Report* (1988, 203 pp.). In addition, the Commission published four "information papers" on special topics relating to youth and fifteen "working papers" designed to stimulate its thinking. Other publications have appeared since, and a price list is available. The two major reports are $5 each.

1990–91 Directory of American Youth Organizations: A Guide to over 400 Clubs, Groups, Troops, Teams, Societies, Lodges, and More for Young People
by Judith B. Erickson, Ph.D. (168 pp., $16.95, Free Spirit Publishing)

This directory is a comprehensive listing of nonprofit, national-in-scope, adult-sponsored (and supervised) groups serving children and youth of high school age and under. A contact name, address, phone number, and a brief description of the organization's objectives and activities are provided. Listings are arranged by group focus: hobbies, special interests, sports, science/math/technology, religious, patriotic, political, social, conservation, community service, agriculture, and career interests. Parents, educators, librarians, counselors, youth workers, and policymakers will find this guide valuable, and the opportunities for volunteers of all ages are endless.

Suggested Reading

You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10–20 by Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D., and Ann Levine (1990, 417 pp., hardcover, $19.95), Harper & Row, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022.

Parents and Adolescents, Living Together
Part 1: The Basics by Gerald Patterson and Marion Forgatch (1987, 285 pp., paper, $11.95)
Part 2: Family Problem Solving by Marion Forgatch and Gerald Patterson (1989, 299 pp., paper, $12.95), Castalia Publishing Company, P.O. Box 1587, Eugene, OR 97440 503/343-4433.

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (1980, 242 pp., paper, $8.95), Avon Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016.

Teen Pregnancy Challenge, Book One: Strategies for Change and ***Teen Pregnancy Challenge, Book Two: Programs for Kids*** by Jeanne Warren Lindsay and Sharon Rodine (1989, each book 256 pp., paper, $14.95 each or $24.95 set), Morning Glory Press, 6595 San Haroldo Way, Buena Park, CA 90620 714/828-1998.

How to Survive your Adolescent's Adolescence by Dr. Robert C. and Nancy J. Kolodny, Dr. Thomas E. Bratter, and Cheryl Deep (1982, 350 pp., paper, $9.95), Little Brown & Company, 205 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016.

Your Ten- to Fourteen-Year-Old by Louise Bates Ames, Ph.D., Frances L. Ilg, M.D., and Sidney M. Baker, M.D. (1988, 346 pp., paper, $8.95), Dell Publishing, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10103.

Putting the Boys in the Picture: A Review of Programs to Promote Sexual Responsibility Among Young Males by Joy G. Dryfoos (1988, 108 pp., paper, $19.95), Network Publications, P.O. Box 1830, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830 1/800-321-4407.

Pregnancy Prevention and Teen Parenting

Wellesley College Center for Research on Women
Wellesley, MA 02181 617/235-0320
Fern Marx, Project Director

Learning Together: A National Directory of Teen Parenting and Child Care Programs
by Judith Francis and Fern Marx (1989, 196 pp., $20)
Of the 1.3 million children of teenage mothers, an estimated 800,000 are in need of child care services. Without adequate child care and other support services, the educational consequences of teenage pregnancy and parenting are twofold, according to the directory: young parents don't gain the necessary educational skills to support themselves, and their children often enter the educational system economically and developmentally disadvantaged. *Learning Together* profiles more than 300 programs that illustrate the range of services necessary to support young families, and is designed for use by national, state, and local planners and policymakers, in both the private and public sectors, as they consider service options for teen parents and their children.

Males Preventing Pregnancy, Inc.
P.O. Box 8435 Portland, ME 04104
207/879-8376 Carol Schiller, Director

MPP's approach to involving young males in the problem of preventing unintended teenage pregnancies is through a hard-hitting multimedia campaign that encourages their sexual responsibility. Targeting males 14–18 years of age, MPP has created effective television and radio spots, posters, pamphlets, transit cards, billboards, bumper stickers, and buttons that can be customized to meet the needs of local service providers and raise community awareness of the themes, "Sex. It's Nothing to Kid Around With" and "Becoming a Teenage Father is No Joke." A nonprofit affiliate of the Osteopathic Hospital of Maine, MPP launched successful media campaigns for several state agencies and programs which received national recognition. Several components are available in Spanish. Director Schiller leads workshops and training sessions on how to reach a young male audience, utilizing media, and mobilizing community resources for adolescent pregnancy prevention efforts.

■ by David L. Giveans

Reel-to-Reel: Working with Today's Adolescents

The following films and videos are a representative sampling of the excellent array of information and programs now available to adolescents, their parents, and professionals who work with them. Most of the programs presented are either new or were produced within the past five years. They are cross-cultural, represent varied socio-economic backgrounds, and address the complicated problems our teenagers face today.

General Adolescence

Through Young People's Eyes *(29 mins., 16mm/video).* This documentary presents young Black and Hispanic teenagers (primarily young women) growing up in poor, urban neighborhoods. Film intersperses scenes of their everyday lives with candid interviews presenting the advantages and disadvantages of adolescence: discussions about teachers, peer pressure, boyfriends, parents, and obtaining life goals. *The Cinema Guild.*

Specific Learning Disabilities in Adolescence *(33 mins., 16mm/video).* Four young people who participated in the 1975 film, Specific Learning Disabilities: Remedial Programming (Davidson Films, Inc.) are once again interviewed concerning their experiences since 1975. The new film illustrates what research is discovering about the relationship between learning disabilities and adolescents—drop-out rates, juvenile delinquency, social isolation, and academic achievement are explored. *Davidson Films, Inc.*

Dropping In: A Film about Dropping Out *(14 mins., 16mm/video).* What do you say to a teenager who is tempted to drop out of school to enjoy the seductive street life of his/her peers? This "trigger" film promotes discussion about some of the most pressing issues confronting adolescents: school, work, career, literacy, drugs, self-esteem, responsibility, and the conflict between immediate rewards and future consequences. Study Guide. *Select Media, Inc.*

Nobody Listens *(48 mins., video only).* This video depicts the pain and frustration one teenager endures after dropping out of school: the dead-end jobs, too much free time, and no real purpose in life. Divided into two parts, it can be used together or separately. Program guide. *Intermedia.*

Feelings and Emotions

Teaching Our Children About Feelings *(38 mins., video only).* Presents a lively discussion between several young teenagers and author/psychologist, Dr. Robert Firestone, about competition, anger, and other "unacceptable" feelings, and the importance of acknowledging and being responsible for one's feelings. *The Glendon Association.*

When Things Get Tough: Teens Cope With Crisis *(36 mins., filmstrip on videocassette and 3 filmstrips and 3 cassettes).* This program helps teenagers understand that feeling bad when something bad happens is normal and that the crisis will pass. It teaches a four-step technique for coping with stress. Teacher's Guide. *Sunburst.*

A Story of Teen Depression *(32 mins., video only).* This video explores the different forms teen depression may take and notes that most young people can be treated by counseling. Helps viewers understand what is important are the feelings that lie behind depressive behavior, the how, why, and what depressed teens feel inside. Teacher's guide. *Sunburst.*

Video/Film Distributors

Committee for Children (206/322-5050)
172 20th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122

Davidson Films, Inc. (916/753-9604)
231 "E" St., Davis, CA 95616

Fanlight Productions (617/524-0980)
47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130

Illusion Theater (612/339-4944)
528 Hennepin Ave., Suite 704, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Intermedia (1-800/553-8336)
1600 Dexter Ave. North, Seattle, WA 98109

New Day Films (212/645-8210)
121 W. 27th St., Suite 902, New York, NY 10001

Polymorph Films (1-800/223-5107)
118 Sout[illegible]t., Boston, MA 02111

Pyra[illegible]lm & Video (213/836-7577)
Box [illegible], Santa Monica, CA 90406

Select Media, Inc. (212/431-8923)
74 Varick St., Suite 305, New York, NY 10013-1909

Sunburst (1-800/431-1934)
101 Castleton St., Pleasantville, NY 10570

Term Nova Films, Inc. (312/861-8491)
9848 S. Winchester Ave., Chicago, IL 60643

The Cinema Guild (212/246-5522)
1697 Broadway, New York, New York 10019

The Glendon Association (213/552-0431)
2049 Century Park East, Suite 3000, Los Angeles, CA 90067

Walt Disney Educational Media Co. (1-800/535-7345)
11 Quine St., Cranford, NJ 07016

Sexuality

What Guys Want *(16 mins., 16mm/video).* Teenagers of diverse ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds candidly present their attitudes and feelings about their male sexual behavior. Included in the discussion are: "one night stands," commitment, marriage, virginity, peer pressure, first sexual experiences, contraception, rejection, and fatherhood. *Polymorph Films.*

Acquaintance Rape Prevention Series: The Party Game, the Date, Just one of the Boys, End of the Road *(47 mins., total length of 4 films, video only).* Four short films depict the most common form of sexual abuse among teenagers: date rape. Sexual assault between people who know each other happens at home, at school, on a date, day or night. Most victims are 15-19 years old, and in many cases the incident might have been prevented. Study guide. *Select Media, Inc.*

Taking Charge: Teen Perspectives on Sexuality and Birth Control *(21 mins., 16mm/video).* This program examines the myths and misconceptions that teens hold about birth control and sexuality, and the complex realities they confront in seeking to deal with this new aspect of their lives. *Fanlight Productions.*

AIDS

AIDS-Wise, No Lies *(22 mins., video only).* Ten young people whose lives are affected by AIDS reveal their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Their stories break through the youthful sense of invulnerability leaving viewers with the understanding they have choice and control over contracting AIDS. Study Guide. *New Day Films.*

Sex, Drugs and AIDS *(18 mins., video only).* This pioneering film, hosted by Rae Dawn Chong, tells young people what they need to know to avoid getting AIDS. Video describes what AIDS is, how it can and cannot be transmitted, and provides peer support for modifying at-risk behavior. Also promotes understanding of those who are infected with the AIDS virus. *Select Media, Inc.*

Teen Parenting

His Baby, Too: Problems of Teenage Pregnancy *(37 mins., 3 filmstrips or 3 filmstrips on videocassettes).* The often-ignored rights and responsibilities of the young expectant father as well as his legal and moral obligations are examined. Includes discussion of shared birth control, how stereotypes of teenage fathers differ from actuality, and the potential impact of marriage, single parenthood, or adoption. Teacher's guide. *Sunburst.*

Meet a Teenage Mother *(18 mins., video or filmstrip and cassette).* 17-year old Lori became a mother at 15. Video documents her story to offer a revealing look at the problems faced by a teenage single mother. Details support received from her parents, high school day care, social difficulties with her peers, and a personal message to other teenagers. Teacher's guide. *Sunburst.*

Four Pregnant Teenagers: Four Different Decisions *(51 minutes, 4 filmstrips/cassettes or video).* The difficult decisions faced by unwed, pregnant teenagers are discussed: adoption, single parenthood, marriage, and abortion. Program provides opportunity to consider the emotional, ethical, and financial problems involved in these options. Teacher's guide. *Sunburst.*

I'm Not Ready for This *(18 mins., video only).* Program identifies and promotes discussion on the issues, challenges, and options for teen parents. Helps them deal with the problems and opportunities, and encourages teens who are pregnant or new parents to finish school and obtain good health care for themselves and their child. *Intermedia.*

Teens and Family Life

Teen-Parent Conflict: Making Things Better *(30 mins., video only).* Helps teenagers understand the nature of parent-child conflict and shows specific techniques for resolving prob-

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lems. Deals with the key issue of trust and teaches the skills of negotiation. Teacher's guide. *Sunburst.*

Coping with Family Changes *(37 mins., Filmstrips on videocassette or 3 filmstrips and cassettes).* Presents examples from nuclear, single parent, stepparent and blended families to help teenagers see how all kinds of families face and overcome changes in structure and relationships. Encourages all family members to define their roles and express their problems. Teacher's Guide. *Sunburst.*

The Teen Years: War or Peace? *(40 mins., two parts, video only).* Combining spirited animation, live-action footage of parent discussion groups, and practical advice from a clinical psychologist, this two-part program suggests workable solutions to common conflicts. Helps parents handle problem situations such as messy rooms, chores, curfews, peer pressure, drugs, sexuality, and bad grades. *New Day Films.*

One to One: The Generation Connection *(24 mins., video only).* A group of 16- to 18-year-olds come face to face with seniors for the first time. The two groups explore many issues including their perceptions about the role of both older adults and teens in society, the generation gap, self-esteem, goal setting, family issues, death, and the aging process. Viewer's Guide. *Terra Nova Films, Inc.*

Suicide/Death

A Desperate Exit *(48 min., video only).* Malcolm-Jamal Warner portrays 17-year-old Charlie, a popular teenager with a compulsion toward perfectionism and a fear of failure. His suicide devastates and confuses everyone—especially his best friend, Jed, who moves from shock to anger to frustration as he tries to answer questions about Charlie's death. The importance of communication is stressed *Intermedia.*

Before It's Too Late: A Film on Teens Suicide *(20 mins., 16mm/video).* Film teaches students how to spot suicidal behavior in their friends, and stresses they can actually save a life by being a supportive friend. While other films have dealt with the tragedy of teen suicide, this film is unique in offering preventive measures. *Walt Disney Educational Media Company*

Drugs and Alcohol

15 and Getting Straight *(48 mins., video only).* Video is set in the adolescent ward of a Chemical Dependency Unit and graphically depicts several weeks in the lives of six young adults. Offers an inside look at the ravages of teenage substance abuse. *Intermedia.*

Picking up the Pieces: Living with Alcoholic Parents *(48 mins., video only).* 16-year-old Patty's mother is an alcoholic and her father is into heavy denial. No one talks in the family and Patty is trapped in the cover-up. Viewers see everyday agony and pain eating away at her trust and self-esteem. A friend introduces Patty to Alateen, a support group for teenage children of alcoholics where she finds she is not alone or unique. *Intermedia.*

Flip Tops *(26 mins.,).* Teenagers are under enormous pressure to be a part of our drinking society. This film points out that the examples of parents, the media, and peers all conspire to make it easier to go along than abstain; viewers watch two young teens learn to say "no" to alcohol. *Fanlight Productions.*

All the Kids Do It *(21 mins., 16mm/video).* Statistics indicate that 50 percent of all fatal traffic accidents involve alcohol and that teenagers have the highest proportion of alcohol-related vehicular deaths. Program dramatizes these dangers from the teen point of view and helps young drivers to realize that they must take responsibility for their own safety and that of others on the road. *Pyramid Film and Video.*

Sexual Abuse/Prevention

No Easy Answers *(32 mins., video only).* Video addresses issues about sexuality and examines abuse prevention and protection skills including: differences between nurturing and exploitive touch, root causes of sexual abuse, incest, male victims, and messages from the media and advertising. Viewer's Guide. *Illusion Theater.*

Choices *(53 mins., video only).* Laurie is 15, smart, well-off, and she's on the street. She is a victim of sexual exploitation at home and is drawn into the manipulation and violence of the street. This video depicts a girl trapped in a spiral of victimization and models the skills that allow her to escape. *Committee for Children.* □

David L. Giveans is an author, lecturer, publisher, and consultant on early childhood education, parenting, publishing newsletters, and current children/parenting issues films. Contact him at: 187 Caselli Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94114 415/861-0847.

Children and Television: Natural Partners

■ Merrow *Continued from p. 15*

major characters, which required them to know the play well enough to testify accurately. Other students served as attorneys, with the principal as the judge. However, this was a large class, and there weren't enough parts to go around, meaning that some kids had less interesting jobs. But introduce a video system, and a whole new dimension emerges. Newscasters could deliver regular reports on the trial (careful writing required); a panel show could provide a forum for interviewing the defendants (more careful study of the play required); technicians would tape and edit the proceedings, and so on. Some curious students would no doubt end up analyzing the play and perhaps comparing it to "LA Law" or one of the daytime soaps. Everyone would learn important lessons about the cooperative nature of television production, and about Shakespeare's play as well.

Before we moved on, we'd probably try our hands at acting (and videotaping) some of the scenes and speeches. I'd have students watching different actors on their favorite shows to figure out where the camera was, and why. They'd be thinking, writing, and learning.

Years ago, a blue-ribbon panel recommended five sensible objectives for realizing the educational potential of television. (The careful reader will recognize that Christopher Whittle must have based his controversial "Channel One" 12-minute news programs with commercials for the captive audience of high school students on these concepts.)

- Availability. Broadcast children's programs when they're watching television.
- Diversity. The range of content, style, and subject matter should be as broad as a child's curiosity and needs.
- Selectivity. Television should not try to be everything but should do what it does well.
- Focus. Make different programs for different age groups.
- Innovation. Take chances, experiment, explore new concepts.

I suggest a sixth objective: Access. Children ought to have access to information about how television is made and to the TV-making equipment itself. Access invites inquiry and encourages curiosity and creativity. I call it access so as not to scare anyone away, but I am really talking about making sure that young people have power over their own learning, with the guidance of trained professionals. Actually, all I am doing is recognizing ways in which TV is important, even central, to young people. It's time to recognize that television, the most powerful medium of mass communication ever invented, is also a wonderfully effective means of fostering cooperation and acknowledging individuality. □

John Merrow is Education Correspondent for the MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour on PBS. Before joining the Newshour in 1985, he produced and hosted "Options in Education" on National Public Radio from 1974 to 1982 and "Your Children, Our Children" on PBS in 1984. A former public school teacher, Merrow has degrees from Dartmouth, Indiana, and Harvard. Married with four children, he lives in New York City. Currently a member of the Family Resource Coalition's Advisory Committee, Mr. Merrow previously served on FRC's Board of Directors.

■ by Irene Beck

A Preventive Mental Health Approach to Adolescents and Their Families

The face of American families is changing. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, among mothers whose youngest child is between 6 and 13 years old, nearly three-quarters work. One in every four children today will spend at least part of their childhood in a single parent home.

The problems facing adolescents seem to be growing more serious. The National Center for Health Statistics reports that every 78 seconds an American teen ager attempts suicide. Every 90 minutes, one completes it. Every 31 seconds an adolescent becomes pregnant. Nearly half of all high school seniors have used an illegal drug at least once, and almost 90 percent have used alcohol—some on a daily basis.

And family life is more fragmented. Conflicting demands of work and home, shifting roles and responsibilities, differences among individual family members' needs, limited time and energy all combine as potential obstacles to be overcome.

Tackling these challenges requires communication, yet discussions with and about adolescents can often be emotionally charged. Although frustrated adults may feel that their teens are out of reach and not listening, the Education Center of Sheppard Pratt Hospital in Baltimore has found that they can indeed be reached.

No Hang-Ups! is an innovative, and perhaps unique, mental health program designed for teens by the Education Center. Through a telephone call-in service, teenagers can listen to any one of thirty-five audio tapes on topics of vital importance and interest to them. The phone provides a trusted, yet private and confidential way of getting information and education.

The premise of No Hang-Ups! is simple and effective. It offers teens information that is substantive, relevant, and accurate. The materials for each four-minute tape were developed by clinical professionals and reviewed by representatives of more than fifty local and national community organizations related to children and families. High school students served as peer consultants, offering a critical viewpoint in the review and selection of topics.

Tape subjects range from sex to friendship to communicating with parents. While these are more typical concerns, some weightier ones include what to do when your parent drinks too much, or when your parents can't help, or dealing with gangs and violence. Ten of these topics cover urban problems and additional serious ones requested by callers.

When the program was launched in a two-month pilot phase in spring 1987, more than 32,800 callers responded. In 1988, the program was introduced in Cleveland by its United Way; over 10,000 calls are received each week, with an average of 1,500 busy rings. These results speak to the need for a sound prevention approach which works to show young people: how to talk with others about topics of concern; how to find more information about problems of interest to them; and that their feelings are natural, shared by many other teens, and understood.

Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital and Health System is a 322-bed psychiatric, nonprofit hospital and education center. For twenty years, it has provided psychiatric care for children and adolescents and is considered a leader in their treatment. Among its special services is the Forbush School for child and adolescent patients and day students, which enables each student to have an individual education and treatment plan.

However, the focus of No-Hang Ups! is educational, not clinical. As is generally recognized, breakdowns in family communication can lead to serious adolescent risks. Preventive education is seen as a way to help teens in their search for answers and in their struggles to relate to their families.

Callers learn about No Hang-Ups! through flyers, bookmarks, and posters available in schools, libraries, and community agencies. Initially, public service spots were aired on WJZ-TV, a local Baltimore television station, as part of its *For Kids' Sake* campaign which focused on the importance of communication between adults and children. Word-of-mouth through the schools and among teenagers has been so widespread that, while the TV spots were helpful, they were not seen as essential in getting the message out to teens. Teachers have assigned listening as homework, and built class discussions around topics such as "Handling Anger."

The program offers anonymity, posing no risk of embarrassment for a caller seeking information on emotionally charged issues. Each tape recommends further reading on that particular topic. Local libraries have been tremendously supportive in having these books and others related to the telephone topics on special display.

No Hang-Ups! is not a hotline. A prior concern that teens might call in need of immediate help did not prove to be significant. During the pilot phase, telephone operators referred eighteen callers to Maryland's First Call for Help, a crisis intervention program, or to Sheppard Pratt's outpatient program.

As one might expect, the highest interest was in tapes dealing with sex: "Thinking about Sex," "Falling in Love," "Homosexuality," and "Teen Pregnancy." More than half of the callers were interested in a variety of other topics: "Getting Your Parents to Listen," "School—When They Say You Can Do Better," "Friends—How to Make One, How to Be One." While the demand was not as high for some topics, such as "Being Abused" and "How to Ask for Help," those seeking this information need as much access to education as possible.

An important booklet, *In Tune with Teens*, was written for parents to explain the tape contents and to suggest ways of discussing frequently touchy subjects. Two printings of 8,000 copies each were distributed to individuals and organizations including school guidance offices, parent organizations, churches, counseling agencies, and youth and family organizations. The booklet also stands alone with clear, helpful facts and resources for parents. Individual copies from a third printing are now available; see ordering information below.*

Despite the enormous concerns adults have for today's adolescents, teens are definitely willing to listen. Difficult as the barriers to communication might be, parents are looking for ways to reach out and understand their teenagers. Innovative preventive mental health programs can provide an effective tool in building vital bridges within families. □

Irene Beck, Ed.D., works in the field of mental health education. She writes a nationally syndicated news column on families, moderates and produces educational teleconferences, and designs innovative programs for parents and educators related to child and adolescent issues. Dr. Beck is a staff consultant to the Family Resource Coalition.

* *Copies of* In Tune with Teens *(88 pages) cost $3.50 each + $.25 postage. Make checks payable to Sheppard Pratt NCHD (National Center for Human Development) and mail to: Careen Mayer, Director, Sheppard Pratt NCHD, 6501 N. Charles St., P.O. Box 5503, Baltimore, MD 21285-5503 301/938-3929.*

■ **Scales** *Continued from p. 3*

The Positive Possibilities of Young Adolescents

Then too, we are rightly concerned about early sexual experiences and their possible outcomes of pregnancy, AIDS, and STDS. However, we tend both to overestimate the frequency of youthful sexual activity and underattend to issues that sexual activity can mask: for some, the searching for intimacy in a largely impersonal world; for others, the reaching for hope in a world filled with apparent bleakness, and other expressions of the need for us, as human beings, to make connections with others. All of these underlying concerns are cooked up in the crucible of peer pressure to have sex, according to a 1986 Harris poll.[15] In our most progressive health education classes in the middle grades, we may cover saying "no" and contraception, but even in these classes it is rare to help young adolescents deal with the psychology of love and understand how it motivates their own and others' behavior.

Opportunities For Optimism

Our adult expectations based on this incomplete and broad portrait have the effect of blinding many of us to the positive possibilities of young adolescents. By describing the preoccupation with self as a given for all in the age group, we may then be less able to see the desire and reality of young adolescents giving to others and bettering their communities. In more than a dozen U.S. communities, for example, there is a program called Kidsplace, in which governing boards of 11- to 15-year-olds collect data on the condition of their communities from a young person's perspective, and work with community leaders to do something about problems they find.[16]

In the Early Adolescent Helper Program started at the City University of New York, Joan Schine and her colleagues place young people in senior citizen programs and Head Start centers.[17] Data show that the Head Start children who have early adolescent helpers increase their "prosocial" behavior, such as asking for help. Yes, it may be true that most young adolescents worry a lot about their looks, but sizeable numbers also worry about hunger and other social problems, and many do something about that concern, according to the Search Institute study.

Adolescents can also lead others and develop excellent ideas that solve social problems. Young people in middle grades in scores of cities around the country have been trained to serve as conflict managers in their schools, preventing fights and settling disputes rationally.[18] The Future Problem Solving Program (a national program based in North Carolina) includes thousands of young adolescents in its activity of generating messy and complex social problems that may occur and asking young people to propose solutions.[19] Numerous young adolescents are journalists for Children's Express, a national organization which assigns young people to interview leading political figures, cover important social stories and report in newspapers throughout the country under their own bylines.[20] We miss enormous opportunities in thinking that these activities are only for the gifted adolescent.

We in this country have created our picture of young adolescents from a mass of research and popular description based on an experience that is exclusively that of U.S. citizenship, largely that of a white, middle or privileged class. The experiences and development of immigrant adolescents, gay and lesbian adolescents, adolescents with disabilities, and adolescents living in institutions, among others, are not well represented in our broad picture of early adolescent development. As a result, we have an extraordinarily limited view of the great variety, in our country and globally, of the early adolescent experience. Our dim appreciation of this variety is akin to the ignorance so many in the U.S. have for the economic conditions in which most of the world's people live, conditions against which all but the poorest of our poor would be considered relatively well-off.

I am not suggesting that we should or can ignore the problems apparent among a sizeable number of our young, only that as parents, educators, policymakers, and concerned citizens, we might try to accentuate the positive possibilities more and be wary of our tendency to generalize to the many from the experience of the few. Perhaps that is harboring an overly optimistic view of things, but the alternative is despair. I like what Shelley Taylor, a psychologist at UCLA, said in her book, *Positive Illusions* (Basic Books, 1989). She made the case that looking at life's glass as half-full rather than as half-empty is not a sign of pathology. Rather, she insisted, those who are "normal" tend to exaggerate how competent and well-liked they are, while those who are depressed tend to exaggerate the negative and focus on things that are out of their control.

Perhaps we adults need to nurture more of these "normal" optimistic illusions in order to allow the positive possibilities of young adolescents today to become the happy realities of tomorrow. □

Peter Scales, Ph.D., is Deputy Director of the Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and is a frequent contributor to national publications. The Center, an FRC member, works to promote the healthy growth and development of young adolescents in their homes, schools, and communities by providing information services, research/demonstration projects, training, leadership development, and advocacy for those who can have an impact on 10- to 15-year-olds.

Contact: Peter Scales, Ph.D., The Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Suite 211-Carr Mill Mall, Carrboro, NC 27510 919/966-1148.

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■ Small *Continued from p. 5*

Developing Support Programs for Families with Adolescents

poor level of funding currently available for prevention programs in general, a condition that is further exacerbated by the lack of evaluation data demonstrating the positive effects of these programs. A fifth obstacle is the inability of programs to attract the participation of high-risk, hard-to-reach families, especially at a time when policymakers and funders want assurances that programs are reaching families in greatest need. A sixth hurdle is the lack of communication between practitioners who design and implement programs and researchers who provide the empirical data on which programs should be based. Finally, there is the question of who will take responsibility for overseeing and providing programs in this area.

However, there are an equal number of reasons to believe that preventive programs offer a promising and cost-effective way to meet some of the needs of adolescents and their families: First, many programs can be purchased, locally adapted, and implemented at a relatively low cost. Second, most programs can be implemented easily in local communities. Third, nearly all programs focus on groups of people rather than individuals, and can thus reach a large number of people rather efficiently. Fourth, the preventive orientation of these programs can help people develop attitudes and skills and gain knowledge that can be useful across a variety of situations. Fifth, preventive programs tend to target environmental conditions that contribute to the formation of problems. As a result, such programs have the potential to change conditions so that fewer problems will occur—not only for the participating child, but for subsequent children in the family and for the wider community as well. Finally, for problems where there exists no known treatment or existing treatment is not very effective, preventive programs provide the most, and sometimes the only, viable solution.

Conclusions

Several broader themes and issues emerge from my review. First, it is apparent that program development activity has far surpassed the level of research and evaluation effort demonstrating program effectiveness.

Second, most existing programs are relatively brief and didactic in their approach, putting more emphasis on parent education than on family support. Preventive programs for families with adolescents need to be more comprehensive in the services and information they provide, create more opportunities for parents to receive support from other parents, and be of longer duration.

Third, the vast majority of preventive programs for families with adolescents are aimed at white, middle class families headed by two parents who are married for the first time. In light of the greater diversity of families in which today's adolescents and their parents live, there is an immediate need for programs to make a more concerted effort to accommodate to or address this diversity.

Fourth, current programs probably work best for families who face few hardships, are under little or no stress, and whose main need is simply more information on adolescent development and general parenting skills. For families under stress, experiencing economic hardship, or whose children are exposed to a multitude of risk factors, such preventive programs alone will probably have minimal impact on the development and well-being of children. For such families, successful prevention efforts must be more comprehensive and address multiple risk and developmental factors. Thus, we must put the programs and the hopes we place on them into a broader perspective.

Finally, preventive programs for families with adolescents have the potential to be a low-cost, efficient way to support some of the needs of families and contribute to the prevention of adolescent problems. However, the field is still in its early stages and is in need of more comprehensive programming approaches, closer links to state of the art research and practice, and better documentation of program processes and effects. □

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Stephen Small is Assistant Professor of Child and Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Extension Human Development and Family Relations Specialist for the University of Wisconsin-Extension. He has conducted research, published scholarly and popular articles, developed family-based programs, and taught courses for graduate students, professionals, and parents in the areas of adolescence and family relations. Dr. Small is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.

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Contact: Dr. Stephen Small, Department of Child and Family Studies, 1440 Linden Drive, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706 608/263-5688.

■ Kramer *Continued from p. 6*

Communicating with your Children

Next, time, use an "I" statement—own the problem. For example: "Son, I want you to know that I'm feeling badly about the way the house has looked lately. I try hard to make this a home we can all be proud of. I'm also tired after work and I don't need additional work. What I do need is some help from you in keeping your own room cleaner. I realize it's *your* room, but it is part of our home. Could you help me out and keep your room more tidy? I'll help if you want me to and I'm available. Okay?"

These are just a few suggestions on how to enhance, improve, and enjoy your relationship with your children. It's not easy to change overnight—but you will be the ones to benefit in the long run. And "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten." You no longer want what you've always gotten. What you do want is the respect you deserve, and the loving relationship you've always hoped to have with your children. It can be yours with just a little work. □

Patricia Kramer is a nationally recognized lecturer and trainer, and author of The Dynamics of Relationships, *a guide for developing self-esteem and social skills designed as a preventive program for teens and young children. The program is used in school systems throughout the country and is a valuable resource for parents, counselors, and organization leaders who work with youth. She is president of Equal Partners, an educational consulting firm that conducts training programs, staff development, and workshops for schools, social service agencies, and national organizations. Ms. Kramer is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.*

Contact: Pat Kramer, Equal Partners, 11348 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895 301/933-1489.

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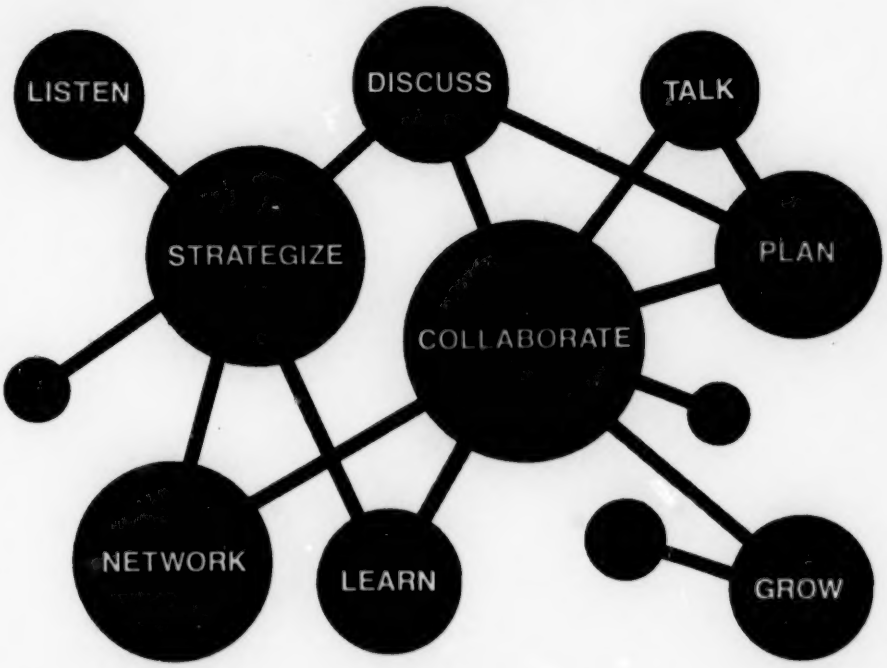

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